

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

GIFT

From the Library of
Henry Goldman, Ph.D.
1886-1972

2.562268

From Porto Rico

Dec. 1910

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/bardofdimbovitza00vacaiala

THE BARD OF THE DIMBOVITZA.

THE BARD OF THE DIMBOVITZA. Roumanian Folk Songs, collected from the Peasants by HÉLÈNE VACARESCO. Translated by CARMEN SYLVA and ALMA STRETTELL. With an Introduction by CARMEN SYLVA.

"The poems have the wild melancholy and the fierce simplicity of all true popular ballads, with an undertone of ghastly mystery that reminds one of the Highland second-sight and Irish fairy tales. . . . They are directly, passionately, fiercely human; rich with a poetic sympathy with external nature, but regarding it almost as the comrade and friend of man. . . . There are elements of the Greek joy in all beautiful sights and sounds . . . but there is also a fierce love of battle and of blood, such as rings through the Nibelungen epic."—FREDERIC HARRISON in *The Fortnightly Review*.

World.—"A real treasure-trove, a valuable addition to the literature of the world."

SONGS OF THE VALIANT VOIVODE and other strange Folk-lore for the first time collected from Roumanian peasants and set forth in English by HÉLÈNE VACARESCO, who also collected the Folk-songs contained in "The Bard of the Dimbovitza." Large Crown 8vo. Printed on handmade paper. Cloth decorated, gilt top. Price, 10*s*. 6*d*.

World.—"An admirable continuation of the 'Bard of the Dimbovitza.' The pieces have many charms beyond fantastic unworldliness. A wonderfully rich and welcome volume."

Queen.—"Transports one into the lost land of romance."

HARPER & BROTHERS, 45, ALBEMARLE ST., LONDON, W.

THE BARD OF THE DIMBOVITZA

ROVMANIAN FOLK-SONGS

COLLECTED FROM THE PEASANTS

BY

HÉLÈNE VACARESCO

TRANSLATED BY

CARMEN SYLVA

AND

ALMA STRETTELL

All rights reserved



HARPER & BROTHERS

45, ALBEMARLE STREET

LONDON, W.

NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION.

Stack
Annex
PC
827
E5V2
1908

INTRODUCTION.

THE strange and beautiful songs, of which the following are a selection, seem to me a real treasure-trove, a valuable addition to the literature of the world. They are peculiar to a certain district of Roumania, and that a district in which the mysterious grandeur of mountains has combined with the melancholy and subtle beauty of vast plains, in influencing its people. The young poetess to whom we owe the discovery of these songs spent four years in collecting them among the peasants on her father's estates; and even though her family had for centuries been known and honoured by this race, yet she encountered many difficulties in trying to induce the peasants to repeat their songs for her. She was forced to affect a desire to learn spinning, that she might join the girls at their spinning-parties, and so overhear their songs more easily; she hid in the tall maize to hear the reapers crooning them; she caught them from the lips of peasant-women, of luteplayers ("Cobzars," so called from the name of their instrument, a "cobza" or lute), of gipsies and fortune-tellers; she listened for them by death-beds, by cradles, at the dance and in the tavern, with inexhaustible patience. They are worthy to rank with the best national songs that India, Arabia, and the

far North have given us; and are truly noble in their childlike purity, and simple treatment of, and sympathy with, every phase of natural human experience. They are mostly unrhymed—the gipsies using rhymes occasionally —and they depend more for rhythm on the long, musical cadence of each phrase, than on any definite poetical form; they are sung to a monotonous chant, and not accompanied by any instrument, except in the case of the Cobzar, who sings to his lute. Most of them are improvisations. They usually begin and end with a refrain, which seems to have been suggested to the singer by something in his surroundings, and to have struck him as fitting in with the mood of the song, although it has not always any immediate connection with it.

The poem called the "Hora" is sung by the youths, the maidens, and the Cobzar, alternately, during the "Hora," or national dance, and while the dancers move slowly round and round in a circle.

Another poem, "The Incantation," bears witness to the belief in witches and spells still existing in Roumania; and Mdlle. Vacaresco herself was present at just such a scene as the song calls up before us, when the witch began her "spells" by waving a bough of hazel-wood over the dead ashes on her hearth.

The poem called "Mad" has a pathetic interest from the fact that it is not an imaginary composition, but was actually overheard, and noted down, from the lips of a woman who had gone distraught upon the loss of her lover. The

poor creature could never be got to stay in her cottage, but haunted a wood near the Vacaresco house, where she would, of an evening, "light the fire" that she speaks of, and could be heard singing her song beside it.

For the spinning-songs, the girls all stand in a circle, spinning; the best spinner and singer being in the middle. She begins to improvise a song, and at any moment she chooses, throws her spindle, holding it by a long thread, to another girl, who has to go on spinning while the first girl pulls out the flax—a proceeding requiring great dexterity —and at the same time, has to continue the improvisation which has been begun.

The "Drama" at the end of the present volume was found in a very ancient MS. hidden in the vaults under the ancestral home of the Vacaresco family. In these vaults the people used of old to take refuge during the Turkish raids.

CARMEN SYLVA.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

INTRODUCTION v

LUTEPLAYER'S SONGS :—

The Young Heiduck 3
The Luteplayer's House 5
Death for Love 8
Song of the Fire 10
Hopeless 13
Gipsy Song 15
Song of the Shroud 17
The Comforters 20
At a Grave 22
"I am Content." 23
The Heiduck's Song 25
If She Were Yet Alive 27
Gipsy Song 30
The Way to Happiness 32
The Dead Wife's Kiss 35
The Soldier's Tent 38
Song of the Blood 40
The Maiden's Blood 41
The Soldier's Blood 42
The Old Man's Blood 45
Two Souls 47
The Well of Tears 49
Song of the Dagger 50

PAGE

Fallen 52
Song 55
The River of Tears 56
Laughter 58
The Soldier 60
The Black Heart 62
The Draught of Tears 63
Mourn Not 65
The Luteplayer's Song 67
Faithless 70
Hay 73
In the Moonlight 75
The Murderer 77
The Dead Soldier 80
Where the Songs Dwell 82
He that Betrayeth Not 84
The Other One 86
The Outcast 87
Barren 89
He that Took Nothing 92
Dirge. On the Death of a Young Man 94
Dirge. On the Death of a Maiden 97
Dirge. On the Death of a Child 100
The Luteplayer's Autumn Song 103
"Accursed" 106
The Orphan 108
The Necklace of Tears 110
The Soldier's Song 112
At the House 115
The Incantation 118
"My mother went away from me" 121
On the Road 123
Cradle Song 125
Stillborn 127

PAGE

The Hora 130
The Moon 135
The Two Knives 138
The Spring 140
The Song of the Young Maiden 142
The Widow 144
The Flower-Child 146
The Heiduck's Flowers 149
The Road to Prison 151
The Soldier's Wife 154
Mad 157
Gipsy Song 160
The Water of Prayer 161
No Son 162
Autumn Song 164
Sleep 166
Forgotten 169
To the Maiden 171
The Song of the Cross-Sisters 173
Dirge of a Mother over her Son 177
The Song of the Old Well 181
Mothers' Tears 183
The Last Day 185
Her Pitcher 188
The Heart-Stealer 189
"It was not Sleeping Time" 191
Forsaken 193
He who remembers 195
Alone 197
The Song that was Accursed 200
The Lament of the Orphan 202
Gipsy Song 205
The Stranger 207
Questions 208

PAGE

Soldier's Song 210
Ashes 213
The Cobzar's Last Song 215

SPINNING SONGS 219

AUTUMN. A DRAMA 259

NOTES 273

LUTEPLAYER'S SONGS.

LUTEPLAYER'S SONGS.

THE YOUNG HEIDUCK.[1]

Yea, the night knows my song,—
And she has told it to the stars in heaven,
The little stars, to whom it seems so sweet,
That every evening they return, and listen
To hear my song from me.

CANST thou perceive, when the green corn is springing,
How it comes forth from out the brown earth's breast?
Nay, but thou canst not see the green corn growing,
Yet doth it grow the while. And young Love groweth
In young hearts even so.

The Heiduck bore the kiss of his belovèd
Upon his lips—and first the wind would steal it
To carry it with autumn leaves away;
And the wind spake: "Give me the kiss, O comrade,
And I will make thereof a little flower."
Then the night spake: "Give me the kiss, O comrade,

[1] Note 1.

And I will make thereof a little star."
"Nay!" he replied, "the kiss of my belovèd
Hath mingled with the currents of my blood;
Here on my lips it lies, and I will give it
To none, but keep it safe for ever more!"
O'er the whole earth the Heiduck roved and wandered;
And kept the kiss.
He roamed through villages, and saw at even
The fair young maidens dancing in the ring.
Bridges he saw, that watch the rivers flowing.
Through sun and moonlight still he kept his course,
Until he came upon a snow-white meadow,
White as though turtle-doves had rained their feathers
Thick on the sward.
And on that meadow the white woman met him,
Took from his lips the kiss of his belovèd,
And thrust it in her girdle, like a flower.
Then down upon the earth the Heiduck laid him,
Since the white woman on the snow-white meadow
Took from his lips the kiss of his belovèd.

Yea, the night knows my song—
And she has told it to the stars in heaven,
The little stars, to whom it seems so sweet,
That every evening they return, and listen
To hear my song from me.

THE LUTEPLAYER'S HOUSE.

I took the beads of her necklace all,
To thread them for her, but they did fall
From my trembling hand, and a hundred ways
They rolled through the young green maize.

Come to the luteplayer's house, come in,
'Tis always open, the birds therein
Build nests, as though the wood it were;
And all day long the sun dwells there
As if it were the sky—though still
He shines in heaven with right good-will
For all to see,
Yet in the luteplayer's cottage, he
Is of the household, verily.

There stands by the door a well of stone,
Wherein the water comes up alone.

When to the luteplayer's cottage there
The moon goes in, a maiden fair
She doth become, and full of grace,
With smiling face.

When at the luteplayer's cottage-gate
Grief enters, she becometh straight
The loveliest woman ever seen,
Gentle, yet ah! so sad of mien.

There in his house on the ground sits he,
Nor will he rise, if thou shouldst come,
But through the window show to thee
His sky's blue dome.
If thou art thirsty, he will ne'er
Give thee a drink, but show thee where
His well doth stand.
And if thou weep, with kindly hand
He will not wipe thy tears away,
But he will sing thee many a lay,
The live-long day.

The little storks, they love it well,
The luteplayer's house the swallows know,
And while yet far away, they tell
Each other, they will thither go,
Because there's singing there.
And sometimes, too, a woman fair
Leans from a window down, and she
Doth watch the luteplayer's house and see
How he sits singing there.

And in the luteplayer's house, beside,
Are flowers and daggers, only those
He never shows;
But empty all the house would seem,
Save for the blessèd sunshine's gleam,
And songs that there abide.
Windows there are on every side,
That one may see the heavens wide,
And grass, and grass so green.
Yea, at the luteplayer's cottage there,
Grass grows indoors, I could declare;
So much of it is seen!

I took the beads of her necklace all,
To thread them for her, but they did fall
From my trembling hand, and a hundred ways
They rolled through the green young maize.

DEATH FOR LOVE.

Take the flower from my breast, I pray thee,
Take the flower, too, from out my tresses;
And then go hence, for see, the night is fair,
The stars rejoice to watch thee on thy way.

A WHILE ago, there came a man at even
Into the village, and the people asked him:
"What seekest thou?"
Yet would the man not tell them what he sought,
But went and took his stand before each hut
That bore upon its wall a painted flower.[1]
At ev'ry one such hut he halted, asking:
"O little hut, wherein a maiden slumbers,
Where is the maiden that will die of love?"
But all the huts were silent.
Then at the smallest hut and last, he halted;
There on the threshold lay a broken spindle,
By the old well lay broken, too, a pitcher.
When at this house he asked
Whether it held the maiden whom he sought,
The maiden threw her window wide, and answered:
"Yea, I will die of love."

[1] Note 2.

Then the man blessed her, and he kissed her lips.
And lo! when morning broke, the maid was dead.

Take the flower from my breast, I pray thee,
Take the flower, too, from out my tresses,
And then go hence; for see, the night is fair;
The stars rejoice to watch thee on thy way.

SONG OF THE FIRE.

I CONSUMED the deep, green forest,
With all its songs;
And now the songs of the forest,
All sing aloud in me.

I watched the maiden spinning;
I love a maiden's distaff,
I love her spindle,
That ceaseless flieth, still to be caught back,
For ever flying, and yet never free.
Then said I: Maiden, why dost watch me so,
And not thy dancing spindle?
Why dost thou hearken only to my songs,
And never sing thine own?
Out there, the day has wedded with the night,
And the moon slyly smiled to see that wedding,
Whereat the birds grew dumb.
The maiden looks at me,
Instead of looking out, and wondering
At the great wedding of the day and night.
Child, child, now hear my song!
I dearly love dear love!

And thou, too, lovest love;
Wouldst sing thyself, and never hear my songs
But that thou lovest love.
The deep green forest, that I did consume,
He told me that a lovely thing was love,
There in the deep green forest.
Yet he said likewise, for he is not jealous,
That on the river banks,
And beneath cottage roofs,
Most lovely, too, is love,
And that in maidens' hearts it makes its dwelling,
Wherein it is much warmer, warmer far,
Than thou art, here by me,
Or than mine own soul, that is warmth itself!
The forest thinks, too, that the laughing spring,
Who is his all-in-all,
Is nobody and naught compared with love;
And that he were to blame for growing green
In spring, except love asked him to grow green.
The forest thinks that tears would die away,
If all had love, as ev'ry nest hath eggs,
And ev'ry head of maize its feathery cap.

All this the forest told me,
And bade me tell it thee;
The forest I consumed, and who the while,
Struggling in death-throes, sang the praise of love.

Maiden, that sendest flying
And callest back thy spindle,
I have consumed the forest,
With all its songs,
And all the songs of the forest
Now sing aloud in me.

HOPELESS.

(Gipsy Song.)

Into the mist I gazed, and fear came on me.
Then said the mist: "I weep for the lost sun."

We sat beneath our tent;
Then he that hath no hope drew near us there,
And sat him down by us.
We asked him: "Hast thou seen the plains, the mountains?"
And he made answer: "I have seen them all."
And then his cloak he showed us, and his shirt,
Torn was the shirt, there, close above the heart,
Pierced was the breast, there, close above the heart—
The heart was gone.
And yet he trembled not, the while we looked,
And sought the heart, the heart that was not there.
He let us look. And he that had no hope
Smiled, that we grew so pale, and sang us songs.
Then we did envy him, that he could sing,
Without a heart to suffer what he sang.
And when he went, he cast his cloak about him,
And those that met him, they could never guess
How that his shirt was torn above the heart,

And that his breast was pierced above the heart,
And that the heart was gone.

I gazed into the mist, and fear came on me.
Then said the mist: "I weep for the lost sun."

GIPSY SONG.

THERE where the path to the plain goes by,
Where deep in the thicket my hut doth lie,
Where corn stands green in the garden-plot—
The brook ripples by so clearly there,
The way is so open, so white and fair—
My heart's best belovèd, he takes it not.

There where I sit by my door and spin,
While morning winds that blow out and in
With scent of roses enfold the spot,
Where at evening I softly sing my lay,
That the wand'rer hears as he goes his way—
My heart's best belovèd, he hears it not.

There, where on Sundays I go alone,
To the old, old well with the milk-white stone,
Where by the fence, in a nook forgot,
Rises a spring in the daisied grass,
That makes whoso drinks of it love—alas!
My heart's best belovèd, he drinks it not.

There, by my window, where day by day,
When the sunbeams first brighten the morning's grey,
I lean and dream of my weary lot,
And wait his coming, and softly cry
Because of love's longing, that makes one die—
My heart's best belovèd, he dieth not.

SONG OF THE SHROUD

(WHILE SPINNING IT).

THOU snow-white apple-blossom,
Unto the ground art fallen,
Down to the earth art fallen,
Thou snow-white apple-blossom.

Snow-white as thou art, so shall be my shroud;
Yea, white as apple-blossoms,
White as a bridal wreath.
Thou wilt be soft for me, my gentle shroud,
Say, wilt thou not? nor chafe my limbs, when I
Have fallen asleep, and know of nothing more;
Whilst in the village houses, round about,
They light the fire without me, and draw near
To tell their tales and spin?
But whilst I sit and spin thee, winding-sheet,
Shall I not tell thee, too, some fairy-tale?

Thou snow-white apple-blossom,
Down to the earth art fallen,
Unto the ground art fallen,
Thou snow-white apple-blossom.

Dear winding-sheet of mine,
Well shalt thou cover me
 When cold my heart shall be!
But now upon my heart, while yet 'tis warm,
 I clasp thee tenderly;
And since thou art to sleep
There in my grave with me,
Then look thy fill once more at this fair earth
That in the grave thou mayst remember her,
And down in that deep grave mayst gladden me,
 With telling of the earth.
But when thou speakest to me in my grave,
 O shroud, O little shroud,
Tell me not of my home,
Nor of my casement, swinging in the wind,
Nor of the moon, that loves
 To steal in through that casement;
Nor of the brook, where silver moonbeams bathe,
And where I used to drink.
Tell me not of my mother—tell me not
Of him, the bridegroom chosen out for me.
For then I should be sorry that I slept
Low in the grave with thee, my winding-sheet.
Yet speak to me
As though thou knewest naught of all these things—
Somewhat on this wise:
How that the world is not worth longing for,
For it is always winter there;

How that the moon for sweetheart hath the cloud,
And that my mother mourned me scarce an hour,
And that my bridegroom came not
To lay his fur-cap down upon my grave
That so the soul might think it was her nest.
 Speak thus, my shroud,
And soundly will I sleep and heavily
 Deep in my grave with thee,
And love thee as the wand'rer loves the well.
Wouldst have me love thee so, speak thus to me.

Thou snow-white apple-blossom,
Unto the ground art fallen,
Down to the earth art fallen,
Thou snow-white apple-blossom

THE COMFORTERS.

He who sleeps by the fire doth dream,
Doth dream that his heart is warm,
But when he awakes, his heart
Is afraid for the bitter cold.
Didst thou mark how the swallows flew, how they flew away from hence?

My father is dead—and his cap is mine,
His cap of fur and his leathern belt—
Mine, too, his knives.
When I fall asleep, when I slumb'ring lie,
Then the knives spring forth, from their sheaths they fly,
And roam the fields.
I know not whither the knives have strayed—
But when morning dawns, at my window-pane
I hear a tapping—I fling it wide,
And there are my knives come home again.
"Where have ye been?" I ask them then,
And they make reply: "In the hearts of men!
There was one so sick for love, and torn—
We healed its wound;
And another was weary and travel-worn—
We gave it rest.

For dear to us are the hearts of men,
And dear their blood;
We drink it as furrows drink the rain,
Then, tapping, come to thy window-pane:
Make way for thy knives—they have done their work.
Now wipe the blood with thy sleeve away—
Thy sleeve with the dusk-red broidered flowers—
And wash the sleeve in the river clean,
Then thrust us once more our sheaths between,
The sheaths on the leathern belt."

He who sits by the fire doth dream,
Doth dream that his heart is warm,
And when he awakes, his heart
Is afraid for the bitter cold.
Didst thou mark how the swallows flew, so swiftly away from hence?

AT A GRAVE.

Look not upon the sky at eventide,
For that makes sorrowful the heart of man,
Look rather here into my heart, and joyful
Shalt thou then always be.

To yonder grave there ofttimes came a woman,
And said to it: "Hast thou forgiven me?"
"Avaunt!" the grave made answer.
Then weeping she would go her way, but going
She ever plucked a flower from the sward.
Yet still the grave would grant her no forgiveness.
Then said the woman: "Take at least my tears."
"Avaunt!" the grave made answer.
But as she, weeping, turned away and went,
Behold, the grave-stone would uplift itself,
And the dead man gaze forth,
Sending a long look after her, that woman
Who weeping went her way.

Look not upon the sky at eventide,
For that makes sorrowful the heart of man;
Look rather here into my heart, and joyful
Shalt thou then always be.

"I AM CONTENT."

A spindle of hazel-wood had I;
Into the mill-stream it fell one day—
The water has brought it me back no more.

As he lay a-dying, the soldier spake:
"I am content!
Let my mother be told, in the village there,
And my bride in the hut be told,
That they must pray with folded hands,
With folded hands for me."
The soldier is dead—and with folded hands
His bride and his mother pray.
On the field of battle they dug his grave,
And red with his life-blood the earth was dyed,
The earth they laid him in.
The sun looked down on him there and spake:
"I am content."
And flowers bloomed thickly upon his grave,
And were glad they blossomed there.

And when the wind in the tree-tops roared,
The soldier asked from the deep, dark grave:
"Did the banner flutter then?"
"Not so, my hero," the wind replied.

"The fight is done, but the banner won,
Thy comrades of old have borne it hence,
Have borne it in triumph hence."
Then the soldier spake from the deep, dark grave:
"I am content."
And again, he heard the shepherds pass
And the flocks go wand'ring by,
And the soldier asked: "Is the sound I hear,
The sound of the battle's roar?"
And they all replied: "My hero, nay!
Thou art dead, and the fight is o'er,
Our country joyful and free."
Then the soldier spake from the deep, dark grave:
"I am content."
Then he heareth the lovers laughing pass,
And the soldier asks once more:
"Are these not the voices of them that love,
That love—and remember me?"
"Not so, my hero," the lovers say,
"We are those that remember not;
For the spring has come and the earth has smiled,
And the dead must be forgot."
Then the soldier spake from the deep, dark grave:
"I am content."

A spindle of hazel-wood had I;
Into the mill-stream it fell one day—
The water has brought it me back no more.

THE HEIDUCK'S SONG.

I tell the forest the wonders I see in my dreams,
And the forest loves to hear the tale of my dreaming,
More than the song of birds,
More than the murmur of leaves.

THE huts had wellnigh beguiled me to stay, for the windows
Stood wide, and the smiles of the maidens shone out from within,
But the Heiduck am I—and I love the far-stretching roads,
And the plains, and my galloping steed!
My mother gave birth to me, sure, on a sunshiny morning,
And had I but never known love, ah, how happy were I!
I sing at the hour when the moon climbs above the horizon;
The tales that the agèd folk know, I can tell, every one,
And I make the young dance, when I sing, to the tune of my ballads.
For I a strange woman have loved;
She comes every night to me now and she kisses my forehead,
And asks if I love her still

She carries a knife in her girdle—her eyes have a glitter
Like daggers—her hand is as white as the veil of a bride.
But her voice I have never heard—and yet know I full surely,
She asks if I love her still.
In token thereof I have given her up my girdle,
My cap with its feathers gay,
My mantle with 'broidery brave and my glitt'ring daggers;
And my songs, I have given them all to her, one by one;
Yet the gayest bring no smile to her face, and the saddest
Are powerless to make her sad.
Then hence she goes, by the small plank over the river,
The plank that sways to her step,
The willows bow down their heads and bend as she passes. . . .
And morning cometh and findeth me poor, and trembling,
Since she hath taken my all from me, even my songs.
And yet is she not content, nor will cease from asking
Whether I love her still.

I tell the forest the wonders I see in my dreams,
And the forest loves to hear the tale of my dreaming,
More than the song of birds,
More than the murmur of leaves.

IF SHE WERE YET ALIVE.

In the courtyard there, the oxen are chewing the cud;
The oxen are weary, because of the long day's toil.
My spindle is resting too—it hangeth down to my feet.

If she I have lost had lived all the days whereof Death has bereft her,
How would she seem to-day, now that I have grown old?
For I was still young when Death took her, and cut off the days of her life.
To-day she would be a fair maiden, and I should have never a sorrow,
But rather, joy should I have, to see her sit by my hearth,
And the flames of the hearth would smile again to me then.
I would weary Heaven with prayers to give her gladness,
That the days of mine age might be glad.
But now I can only pray the earth to have pity upon her,
And to tell her that, when I weep, I am weeping for her,
For a fair young maid, who wandered by ways where the corn was springing.

The furrows would greet her youth. I should see her appearing
Amid the trees and beside the river, and say:
"See what was born of my blood!"
My husband would say: "O wife! we are richly blessèd!"
I would never have shown her a grave, if the grave had not taken
My daughter from me;
But the whole day long would have sung her songs, that her dreaming
Might all be one song;
And I would have held her little heart in my hand,
That no one might touch it,
Whispering: "This is her heart that I hold in my hand."
Yea, and her smile would even have adorned the forest,
So that oft would the forest have said: "Come, send us thy child."
Ah, soul, little soul, dost thou nothing but sleep in the earth?
Then come, come back to me now, in the bright spring-days,
Come hither along the path where the willow-trees are embracing,
For none will meet thee there;
Come at the hour when the village is all at work;
Come as thou wouldst be now,
If thou indeed hadst lived all the days whereof Death has bereft thee,

And spin thou off for me one single distaff, and say:
"See, mother, I filled thy spindle."

In the courtyard there, the oxen are chewing the cud;
The oxen are weary, because of the long day's ploughing.
My spindle is resting too—it hangeth down to my feet.

GIPSY SONG.

When at morn on my window thy knock sounds light,
I open it quick, that thy breath may waft nigh;
Straight into my chamber two suns shine bright!
Hast thou also, tell me, two suns, O sky?

The sky then laughs so contentedly—
It knows whom I love—and thou art he!

When the other draws near in the twilight dim,
The window is shut in his face outright,
Yet always he brings two nights with him!
Good lack! dost thou, sky, ever twice have night?

The sky pulls a roguish face above,
It knoweth that this one—I do not love!

My necklet of copper is dear to me,
It glitters like gold in the sunbeams bright,
But brighter than this in my heart shines he—
My love—with the glorious sun's own light.

At morn when we go on our way, fresh green
And flowers spring up where his tent hath been

When he sings by the smouldering fire, the flame
 Leaps up again, glowing with quickened life;
His very first shot bringeth down the game,
 And the blood turns not black on his gleaming knife.

His hate doth scorch like the sun's fierce beams,
His love giveth life like cooling streams.

His sweetheart grows fairer, her gay song rings,
 The chains on her neck are as sunbeams bright,
The smouldering fire flames up when he sings,
 He shines in my heart with the sun's own light.

At morn when we go on our way, fresh green
And flowers spring up where his tent hath been.

When at morn on my window thy knock sounds light,
 I open it quick, that thy breath may waft nigh;
Straight into my chamber two suns shine bright.
 Hast thou also, tell me, two suns, O sky?

The sky then laughs so contentedly;
It knows whom I love—and thou art he!

THE WAY TO HAPPINESS.

If thou shouldst come at evening, when the moon doth rise,
Thou wouldst see that the moon is very red, when she rises;
But thou lovest those evenings better, when she is very pale,
Like a dead woman,
And when she looks upon the earth with sadness
As though it were the sadness of the Earth
That made her pale.

Thou dost sit down upon my threshold;
And since the threshold is very narrow,
I sit me down upon the grass by the threshold,
And our spindles fly together;
And we do not know which of the two flies faster,
Thine or mine.
We watch the road,
Even as though something expected were coming down the road.
And we see a little horse pass by, that has broken loose.
Little horse, where goest thou?
If thou dost seek the plain, take the path that leadeth downward,
And thou wilt find the plain.
If thou dost seek the well,

Pass beneath the poplars there, where the ravens build
their nests,
And thou wilt find the well.
But if thou seekest happiness, go over all the earth,
With the pallor of the moon,
And thou shalt not find it.
And in watching the little horse that ran so fast
Beneath the pallor of the moon,
I felt that the little horse was carrying me away.
How glad we were!
The villages were sleeping;
The hearts of weary men were sleeping too,
And their sleep wondered, thus to hear us pass.
The birds were sleeping, and their dreams
Wondered to hear us pass.
And we passed o'er all the earth, till the morning came, in
pity,
To tell the moon to hide her sadness,
That saddened the sadness of the earth.
And I found myself upon my threshold once more,
And there our fallen spindles were asking each other
Which of the two went faster, thine or mine.
And I did not tell the spindles
That the little horse had gone much faster than
they,
And that he had not taken the path that goes down to the
plain,
To find the plain;

Nor passed beneath the poplars where the ravens build
their nests,
To find the well.
And the little horse will yet go on, over all the earth,
But I shall stay in the grass beside my threshold,
And watch him pass.

If thou shouldst come at evening, when the moon doth rise,
Thou wouldst see that the moon is very red when she rises;
But thou lovest those evenings better, when she is very pale,
Like a dead woman,
And when she looks upon the Earth with sadness,
As though Earth's sadness made her pale.

THE DEAD WIFE'S KISS.

The flowers fear the hoar-frost;
And, save the stars, none see
The flowers die by night.

A MAN passed down the road—how sad was he!
My sister of the cross,[1] who is yon man,
Who goes so sorrowfully on his way?——

The other night, there rose up a dead woman
Out of her grave, because the night was fair.
She was so glad to see the earth again,
That she kissed all she found upon her way.
She kissed the flowers growing by the grave—
Beneath her kiss the flowers all drooped and faded.
She kissed the time-worn brink of the old well,
And the well felt as though a stone were sinking
Down to its depths, at the dead woman's kiss.
Then the dead woman met yon man, who wandered
Abroad that night, because the night was fair;
And him the dead kissed also, on the lips.

When o'er the new-mown hay the light wind passeth,

[1] Note 3.

Each little blade doth sorrow that it stands not
To take the wind's soft breath.
Down in the river-bed a stone is lying;
The river has flowed over it so long,
That now the stone has learnt them all by heart,
The river's many songs.
When the grass stands full high,
It reaches up to all the maidens' girdles.

And the dead kissed yon man upon the lips,
And he can eat no more, can drink no more,
Since the dead woman's kiss.
Sleep lays her kiss no more upon his brow
Since the dead woman's kiss.
And if he slept, no one would dare to watch him
Since the dead woman's kiss.
And yet he never saith: "O thou dead woman,
Why hast thou laid thy kiss upon my lips,
That I can eat no more, and drink no more,
Since that thy kiss?"
But he saith: "Let the grass with softest murmurs
Grow o'er thy grave, as though birds sang therein.
And may'st thou in thy grave long keep remembrance
Of earth, and of thy house, and of the weeping
Of those that wept for thee;
Yea, of the mourning
Of those that mourned for thee.
Thy dust be fruitful as my mother's womb,

And let the earth rejoice to have thy dust."
And yonder man
Bears the dead woman's kiss upon his lips,
And he can eat no more, nor drink, since then.

The flowers fear the hoar-frost.
None save the stars see the flowers die by night.

THE SOLDIER'S TENT.

Across the mountains the mist hath drawn
A cov'ring of bridal white;
The plains afar make lament, and mourn
That the flutt'ring veil of the mist-wreaths born
Hath hidden the mountains from sight.

THE soldier lay smiling peacefully
Asleep in his tent on the sward,
The moon crept in and said: "Look at me,
A glance from thy sweetheart am I, for thee!"
But he answered: "I have my sword."

Then the rustling wind drew softly near,
Played round him with whispers light:
"I am the sighs of thy mother dear,
The sighs of thy mother am I, dost hear?"
But he answered: "I have the fight."

Then night sank down from the dark'ning sky
Round the sleeper, and murmured: "Rest,
Thy sweetheart's veil o'er thy face doth lie!"
But he answered: "No need of it have I,
For the banner doth cover me best."

By his tent the river, clear and wide,
Rolled onward its silver flood,
And said: "I am water, the cleansing tide
More blessèd than aught in the world beside."
But he answered: "I have my blood."

Then Sleep drew near to his tent, and low
She whispered with soothing breath:
"I am Sleep, the healer of ev'ry woe,
The dearest treasure of man below."
But the soldier replied: "I have Death."

Across the mountains the mist hath drawn
A cov'ring of bridal white;
The plains afar make lament, and mourn
That the flutt'ring veil of the mist-wreaths born
Hath hidden the mountains from sight.

SONG OF THE BLOOD.

The blood, the blood that flows through the veins of men,
As the rivers through meadows flow,
The blood was jealous of all the birds' sweet songs,
And said: "How I shall sing!"
The blood was jealous of all the wild wind's songs,
And said: "How I shall sing!"

THE MAIDEN'S BLOOD.

Upon an evening in the month of May,
When from the heavens like a burning tear
The sun dropped down,
Then did the blood awaken in the veins
Of the young maiden wand'ring through the fields.
Then the blood cried to her,
And the blood burned in her,
And as it burned within her, thus it spake:
"What art thou making, maiden, of thy youth?
What wilt thou make of me?
I tire of this light tripping to and fro,
This idle running through thy strong young frame.
Now would I fain stand still and do my work;
And mark, when thou shalt see
This work of thine own flesh, thy blood renewed,
Then shalt thou thank the blood that gave thee this."
So the blood burned within her,
And thus it cried to her.
And there, beside the maize-field,
The other one was waiting,
He—the mysterious one.

In the month of May, at even,
The sun drops down from heaven
Heavily, like a tear.

THE SOLDIER'S BLOOD.

The blood that is spilt on the ground turns black,
The blood turns black that is spilt;
But the blood is red in the hero's veins,
As red as a ripe red berry,
As red as the lips of a maiden,
As red as her Sunday girdle.

On the eve of the battle the hero sleeps,
But his blood sleeps not, that he soon shall shed
As the storm-clouds shed the rain.
Red is the blood in the hero's breast,
And he hears it speak in his sleep;
And the blood speaks thus:

"I shall out to-morrow
Like wine from the cask,
And bright will I paint him,
With burning crimson,
The noble boy.
Ha! what joy to come forth
To the glorious daylight,
I, captive so long!
Shall I paint him a wreath,
A gay red wreath,

On his radiant brow?
Nay, for his fur-cap
Lies close on his brow;
No stain will I cast
On the cap of the hero.
Nor from his shoulder
Will I spring forth,
When the enemy's bullet shall call,
For the hero's shoulder
Beareth his weapon,
And thus hath it honour enough!
Nay, there will I forth,
Where thy young heart is beating,
My hero, thy bold brave heart.
With me shall thy life
Ebb as gently away
As a flower that floats on the stream;
Yea, all thy desires shall fade,
But the name of the hero shall fade not,
And thy heart shall be garlanded round
With a garland of blood.
When thy mother beside thee stands
Weeping, with folded hands,
The stain on thy heart,
The blood-red stain,
Shall be softer than all her prayers.
And when thy bride
Warms thee with tears,

The stain on thy heart,
The blood-red stain,
Shall be warmer than all her tears.
And when the flowers
Bloom on thy grave,
The stain on thy heart,
The small, red stain,
Shall be fairer than all the flowers.
When the old folk tell
Of the young who fell,
Then the stain on thy heart
Shall think of thee,
More proudly than all their songs.

The blood that is spilt on the ground turns black,
The blood turns black that is spilt.
But the blood in the hero's veins is red,
Red as a ripe red berry,
Red as the lips of a maiden,
Red as her Sunday girdle.

THE OLD MAN'S BLOOD.

Ah me! how sober I am and old!
Ah me! how poor and how icy cold!
Cold as the mountain 'neath snow-drifts hoar,
Cold as the sword that is drawn no more.

Ah me! how sober I have grown and sad,
And naught can give me rosy youth again;
Neither the songs of the young,
Nay, nor the foam of the wine.
For I have now past over
Into the veins of the young,
Nor can I die
As long as there are men begot of me.
Yet cold I am and wearily I flow,
Even as a weary river,
Flowing through wide, flat plains.
Wilt thou not warm me, spade, with thy hard toil?
Nay, but thou canst not warm me.
Wilt thou not warm me, steed, with thy wild galop?
Nay, but thou canst not warm me.
And even were I called forth through a wound,
I should but thinly trickle,
Poor coward, that I have grown!
For many generations took of me,
And I am born anew in them once more,
The while I die.
But ah! how cold I am!
Warm thou me, Sun!
Then the Sun answers: "But when thou wert young,
Didst need me not to warm thee."
And he is right, the Sun!
Yet ah! how cold am I!
Cold as a widow's heart,

As the last penny in a spendthrift's purse.
The trees feel no compassion for me,
They have their fresh young sap;
The maidens feel no pity for me,
They have their chains of silver.
How gladly were the old man's blood
To its last drop drained dry!

Ah me! how sober I am and old!
Ah me! how poor and how icy cold!
Cold as the mountain 'neath snow-drifts hoar,
Cold as the sword that is drawn no more!

TWO SOULS.

Now get thee down to the plain, and there
Thou shalt see the plum-trees blossoming,
And the plum-trees all, so white and fair,
Will tell thee how they love the spring.

My love went hence at break of day,
And at eventide she returned no more;
I asked each path and road I saw:
"Which is the way she went, which way?"
And a little child in her arms she bore!

I asked the people: "Have ye seen
A woman, in whose arms doth lie
A little child?" But they hurried by,
Too busy to answer me, I ween;—
And the people gave me no reply.

By the river I sat me down and said:
"What sings in thee, that dost onward roll?"
And the river answered: "The baby's soul."
I passed yon poplars, and overhead
Sang in their branches the mother's soul.

Said the mother's soul to the baby's soul:
"Two together on earth were we."
And both the souls had forgotten me.

Now get thee down to the plain, and there
Thou shalt see the plum-trees blossoming,
And the plum-trees all, so white and fair
Will tell thee how they love the spring.

THE WELL OF TEARS.

The night is coming, let thy spindle be.
Those who went by this way
Spoke of their huts together, and the huts
Seemed far, so far away.

WHAT saw'st thou at the bottom of the well?—

I saw my face, my bodice, and my chain.—

Child, didst thou see naught else?—

I saw there at the bottom of the well
A man who wept.
My face, down there, was sore afraid of him;
And all the water in the well was naught
But this man's tears.
I was afraid, and would not draw those tears.
Then came a woman, and I went aside,
But yet I saw, how she drew up those tears,
And how she drank them, looking all the while
Up at the sky.
Then with her apron she did wipe her lips,
And went from thence—and I, too, went my way.

The night is coming, let thy spindle be.
Those who went by this way
Spoke of their huts together, and the huts
Seemed far, too far away.

SONG OF THE DAGGER.

THE dagger at my belt it dances
Whene'er I dance;
But when I drink the foaming wine-cup,
Then it grows sad;
For it is thirsty too, the dagger,
It thirsts for blood!

"Give, give me drink," it saith, "O Master,
For if I wear no stain of crimson,
The sunshine is ashamed to glitter
Upon my blade.
Then give, that I too may be drunken
With the warm blood that flows from wounds.
The maids will find thy kisses sweeter
When thou hast quenched my thirst,
And I shall dance, when thou art dancing,
More gaily at thy belt."

Did I but heed my dagger, now at night-time,
I should go find thee, love.
Beneath thy shift I should seek out so deftly
The spot where beats thy heart,
And pour thy blood's red warmth out for my dagger,

Because thy kiss, O love, thou hast denied me,
And because I for that thy kiss have thirsted,
Even as the dagger thirsteth for thy blood.

Then will the sunshine sparkle and be merry,
Seeing thy red young blood,
Yea, and the merry sunbeams, they shall dry it,
Together with my tears.
My tears and thy blood shall flow together,
Mingling like rivers twain;
And though thy blood be hot, yet can it never
Be burning as my tears.
Nay, but thy blood will wonder when it feeleth
How burning are my tears.

The dagger at my belt, it dances
Whene'er I dance;
But when I drink the foaming wine-cup,
Then it grows sad;
For it is thirsty too, the dagger,
It thirsts for blood!

FALLEN.

Plant no more flowers, I tell thee, beside the cottage-wall,
Its shadow makes them wither—and flowers love the sun.

Four weeks it is, O sister, that not a single raindrop
Has fallen on our meadows,[1] and for four weeks I weep.
Yes, I—who with my laughter could make those laugh
that wept.
I hate my girdle's pearl-drops, the ducats of my necklace,
And as the Heiduck's mantle, my bodice weighs me down.
For sin has crossed my threshold, and shut the door
behind it,
And I am left a prisoner, here with my sin alone.
The blessèd air of heaven can find me out no longer,
Since sin has shut the door.
And they, whom once I cherished, all tell me now: "We
leave thee
Here with thy sin alone."

When that is born that comes of sin, how dare I
Say to it: "Thou art born."
For, could it answer, it would surely answer:
"Far better had I died."

[1] Note 4.

Show me the churchyard road, that I may learn there
To trust the graves, and tell them of my sin ;
The graves alone will not upbraid me with it,
For they still say to Love :
" Love, be thou blessed for all the fruits thou bearest ·"
And never question, how those fruits are borne.

But all things living turn from me away.
The maidens spurn me : " We are pure," they say.
The stars are all ashamed to look at me ;
Our crops are long forsaken of the rain ;
He whom I love, upbraids me that I loved him,
And fearfully his glance avoideth mine ;
When at the sight of me the maidens redden,
He reddens too—my shame makes him ashamed.
The fountain gives me water as of yore,
But the cool draught refreshes me no more ;
And if I should draw nigh, they would reproach it
For letting this my face be mirrored there ;
The wand'rer is amazed
To see my spindle's weariness, and asks,
" Who is yon wife, whose spindle is so listless ?"
Then falt'ringly my sisters answer him :
" We know not whence her spindle's weariness."
Show me the churchyard road, that I may learn
To make the graves my friends,
Since from their homes and hearths men banish me
Because my coming poisons all their joy,

Seeing I ever bring my curse with me.

The joy that once I tasted is like a dried-up river,
With naught but stones to fill it—the river is dried up.
For joy can cross my threshold no more, since sin hath
crossed it,
And shut the door so fast.

*Plant no more flowers, I pray thee, so close around the
cottage,*
Its shadow makes them wither—and flowers love the sun.

SONG.

Two birds flew into the sunset glow,
And one of them was my love, I know.
Ah, had it but flown to my heart, its nest!

Two maidens down to the harvest go,
And one of them is my own, I know.
Ah, had she but come to me here, it were best!

Two stars remembered the long ago—
And one of them was my heart's great woe.
If it had but forgotten, and paled in the west!

Two children died in the hut below,
And one, my heart, to the grave doth go.
Ah, had it but taken me with it to rest!

THE RIVER OF TEARS.

I have full twenty ducats upon my Sunday necklace,
When I laugh, the birds all twitter: "How merrily she laughs."
The nearest path to the village leads down along the brook.

THINK thou no more of that which thou hast seen;
For ever will thy brow be overcast
If thou dost think thereon.

The Heiduck hath two mantles;
And his courser is so fleet;
And all the maidens love him,
For his mantles and his courser,
And for his songs
The Heiduck passed beside a grave at even,
And there he heard his dead love say to him:
"Give me thy mantle, for the grave is cold."
But he sped on and gave her not his mantle.
And then again he heard his dead love saying:
"Give me a kiss, for oh, the grave is cold."
But he sped on, and gave her not the kiss.
And then his dead love saith:
"Rein in thy courser fleet, for I am cold
Here in my grave."

But he sped on, and reined not in his courser.
Again his dead love saith:
"Then sing thy songs to me, for I am cold,
Here in my grave."
But he sped on, and sang her not his songs.
Then in her grave his dead love fell a-weeping—
Her tears did wet his mantle,
Her tears became a mighty flood, that checked
His fleet steed's gallop,
And all his songs were silenced by her tears.

I have full twenty ducats upon my Sunday necklace,
When I laugh, the birds all twitter: "How merrily she laughs."
The nearest path to the village leads down along the brook.

LAUGHTER.

The leaf is loth to fall, while yet the sky is blue,
And saith unto the wind:
"Why hast thou made me fall, while yet the sky is blue?"

She ever laughed, that woman;
And whoso met that woman,
Her laughter made them weep.
They said: "Oh, laugh no more."
And all she met upon her way grew sad
And told her of its sorrow.
The trees around her said:
"Where are our leaves and birds?"
The dried-up rivers mourned,
Lamenting for their streams.
Men showed her all their tears;
The maidens loosed their girdles,
That she might see how sorrowful their heart was;
And everything did tell her of its woe,
To stop that woman's laughter.
The graves unclosed, and showed their dust to her,
Their doors the houses opened
To let her see the empty hearths within;
The childless women
Made plaint of their unfruitful wombs, accursed;

The plains stretched out their barrenness before her,
And men their sum of crime;
And one and all they said: "Behold our pain,"
To stop that woman's laughter,
Yet went she laughing through a world of sorrows.

The leaf is loth to fall, while yet the sky is blue,
And saith unto the wind:
"*Why hast thou made me fall, while yet the sky is blue?*"

THE SOLDIER.

THE soldier was a-weary.
I spake: "Come, sit thee down;"
I gave him water from my wooden pitcher,
And asked him: "Hast thou quenched thy thirst?"
The soldier looked deep down into mine eyes,
And I, I saw his smile.

The maize was full of sunshine,
The sunshine made my distaff bright as gold;
My necklace had red beads.

But yet, the soldier went away
When he had drunk the water from my pitcher,
Rested his weariness upon my threshold.
The threshold still doth say:
"His weariness he rested here on me,"
And still my heart remembereth his smile.
But shouldest thou again come down this road
That looks toward my house,
Then linger not
Since thou must soon pass on.
Go drink from out the river,
And rest thee in the forest;

For if thou come back here again, my heart
Will have two sorrows.

I love the hero and his name is sweet
To call to mind, as chimes of Sunday bells.
When he goes by, the children gaze at him,
The sun looks down to see him, how he goes
On to his death.
For he will die in fullest light
Of glorious day;
His soul will shout for joy, to leave the earth
In radiant day.—
I love the hero.
And sweet will be the maiden's love to thee,
Though all unknown—for like a star above,
So is the maiden, giving light to all,
Yet keeping all her fire within herself.
And thou shalt die, not knowing of this love,
Though thou hast drunk from out my wooden pitcher,
Rested thy weariness upon my threshold.
I love the hero!

The soldier was a-weary.
I said: "Come, sit thee down;"
I gave him water from my wooden pitcher,
And asked him: "Hast thou quenched thy thirst?"
The soldier looked deep down into mine eyes,
And I, I saw his smile.

THE BLACK HEART.

A HEART there was—poor heart—as black as night,
And naught in all the world could make it white.

Poor heart, it prayed the doves, as they flew by,
To droop their soft white wings o'er it, and try
If that might help—but it was all in vain,
For black as night the poor heart did remain.
And then it begged the moon, a long, long while
To gaze upon it with her silv'ry smile.
And long the moon gazed down, full many a night,
Yet still in vain—the poor heart grew not white.
The river with its waters washed it o'er,
E'en as it doth the pebbles on its shore,
And even as on tender corn, the rain
Fell fast upon it—yet was all in vain.
The sun looked pitying down, compassionate,
On the heart's blackness and its bitter fate.
At last a heart, a happy heart, came by,
—Happy, for it was white—and drawing nigh,
Touched the black heart—and lo! it broke in two,
Yet ere it broke, as white as snow it grew,
And of its fragments, every one did prove
White as the feathers of a turtle-dove.

There was a heart—poor heart—as black as night,
And naught in all the world could make it white.

THE DRAUGHT OF TEARS.

To the sound of thy voice the rivers gladly flow.
The fruit on my trees, my plum-trees, still is green,
The sun ev'ry morning looketh down and saith:
"*What, not yet ripe?*"

For he doth thirst no more,
Therefore for others' thirst he has no pity.
He lets the rain lie heavy on his cloak,
And blesses not the rain,
Sees the brooks flow, and blesses not the brooks;
He gazes on the well's cool deeps,
Nor blesses its cool deeps,
For this is he, who drank of his own tears;
His thirst is quenched for ever.
He let them trickle down into his glass,
Let the sun glitter on them, and the moon
Mirror herself therein.
And sun and moon both said: "What crystal water!"
Then did he put his lips to it and drink.
And his lips spake: "What fiery, burning water!"
This is the man, who drank of his own tears.

To the sound of thy voice the rivers gladly flow.
The fruit on my trees, my plum-trees, still is green,
The sun ev'ry morning looketh down and saith ·
"What, not yet ripe?"

MOURN NOT.

On the bench beside my door
Two men did sit them down.
Weary they seemed, and whispered there together,
Then went their way;
And who they were, I could not ever learn.

He whom I love is dead,
And yet I mourn him not,
Because he told me that I must not weep.

The maize grows high, and low are all the rivers;
The maids go wading through them, and the water
Just wets their aprons, and their girdles too.

For him I weep not,
For dearer was his grave to him than I;
And I will not be jealous of his grave,
Or envy it for my belovèd's sleep.
Ah no! but to the grave I say:
"Keep him, for he is thine!"
Only the grave hath taken, too, my smile,
My gaily ringing voice, and lightsome step.
"Give me back these," I say unto the grave;

The grave replies: "Not so, for else were he
Left all so lonely here!"
Then to my love I say: "Awake, awake,
And bring me back again my lightsome step,
My voice that rang so gaily, and my smile."
But yet he hearkens not.
So now I must go down into the grave,
To get them back from him.
Only I know, when I am in the grave,
And see my heart's belovèd,
There shall I stay for ever, with my smile,
My gaily ringing voice, and lightsome step.

On the bench beside my door
Two men did sit them down.
Weary they seemed, and whispered there together,
Then went their way;
And who they were, I could not ever learn.

THE LUTEPLAYER'S SONG.

The flame will catch thy floating veil,
If thou dancest round the fire,
Beware, then, for I love thy veil
Full well, my heart's desire;

More than the moonlight, or my lute's
Sweet plaintive melody,
More than the heart that was mine own
Until I gave it thee.

So many songs I sang thee, love,
From the whole wide world's store;
Did none find favour with thy heart,
Wouldst thou hear none once more?

How on the Heiduck's stern, black brow,
One gleaming star there shone,
Because his sweetheart, sorrowing, laid
Her parting kiss thereon?

Hast thou forgotten, too, the song
Of the maiden proud and fair,
Whose spindle was of hazel wood,
Slender, and light as air?

Or of the phantom, who each night
 His tombstone bore away,
That on his grave flowers might, instead,
 Have time to bloom, ere day?

Dost thou remember none of them,
 The songs I sang of yore?
Did none find favour with thee, love,
 Wouldst thou hear none once more?

For I am the Cobzar, my hand
 Is light—my heart, I ween,
Is brimming over more with song
 Than all the forest green;

For it knows winter storms—not I,
 I'm warm as is a nest,
So that I warm the very snow,
 It melts upon my breast.

Men's pain and anguish do but lend
 My living songs more fire,
Their weeping is as wine to me,
 To stir me and inspire.

For I am the Cobzar. No rock,
 No stream can bar my way,
Nor waterfall nor tangled wood;
 I'm light of foot and gay.

The sky itself must envy me,
For we are of one mind;
And if thou be not weary, hark
To me, as to the wind.

And love me, love me, little one,
That I of bliss may sing;
Then leave me, that with tears and woe
My mournful song may ring;

And die! My song must know death too,
And what its sorrows are,
That it may learn despair's true ring;
Die then! I am Cobzar!

FAITHLESS.

A woman came into my field at even,
And asked of me: "How fares it with thy crops?"
I said: "Right well—the crops stand thick and high."

YET did she always tell me that she loved me—
Only, she loved that other better far;
So one dark night they fled away together.
Her face the moon hid, not to see them going,
Nor have to tell me, how she gladly went.
I heard no echo of their horses' hoofs,
Yet now I hear them ever in mine ears.
At night I waken with a start, and say:
"Those be their horses' hoofs!"
I never saw them kiss—yet always see it.
And now at night I waken with a start,
And say: "I see their kisses!"
I would not, she should weep as I am weeping,
For she would lack the strength of soul to hold
The bitter curses back.
And I am ever on the eve of cursing,
Yet have I never cursed her to this day.
If I could bless her, I were glad; yea, gladly
Would pray for her, and give her all my prayers

Instead of this my pain.
Yet still my fancy sees her happy cottage,
And peaceful sleep, that knows no grievous dread.
Then I upbraid myself, for having sorrow
So long as she can smile,
For being one, who, if perchance remembered,
Could make her laughter cease.—
I ask all other women: "Where, where is she?"
And Fate: "What hast thou done, to take her from me?"
I fain would have his blood, whom so she loves;
Yet would not see him, no, not e'en to kill him!
If but my knife alone could find the way,
Then would I tell it: "Go—I wait thy coming!"
Yet would that blood strike horror to my soul—
And that man's death could never comfort me.
And neither will I die, for in the grave
I should no longer see the sun she sees,
Nor the same stars, nor the same wide, blue heaven;
Nor suffer still upon the self-same earth
Where she has happiness.
And I am glad the same sun should look down
Upon my sorrow and her joy, for so
I seem to share some one thing with her still.

That other now doth hear her spindle's whirr!—
Yet is it not my will that he should die,
Since I could never kill him—and his death
Naught could avail me now.

What shall I do to hold from cursing her'—
Nay, rather, school myself to say to her:
"Now ease thy heart, I have forgiven thee;
Thy hearth be peaceful, fruitful be thy womb,
And ever green the threshold of thy door;
Nor let thy laughter cease, remembering me."

A woman came into my field at even,
And asked of me: "How fares it with thy crops?"
I said: "*Right well—the crops stand thick and high.*"

HAY.

YESTERDAY'S flowers am I,
And I have drunk my last sweet draught of dew.
Young maidens came and sang me to my death;
The moon looks down and sees me in my shroud,
The shroud of my last dew.

Yesterday's flowers, that are yet in me,
Must needs make way for all to-morrow's flowers.
The maidens, too, that sang me to my death
Must even so make way for all the maids
That are to come.
And as my soul, so too their soul will be
Laden with fragrance of the days gone by.
The maidens that to-morrow come this way
Will not remember that I once did bloom,
For they will only see the new-born flowers.
Yet will my perfume-laden soul bring back,
As a sweet memory, to women's hearts
Their days of maidenhood.
And then they will be sorry that they came
To sing me to my death.
And all the butterflies will mourn for me;
I bear away with me
The sunshine's dear remembrance, and the low

Soft murmurs of the spring.
My breath is sweet as children's prattle is ;
I drank in all the whole earth's fruitfulness,
To make of it the fragrance of my soul
That shall outlive my death.
Now to the morrow's flowers will I say :
"Dear children of my roots !
I charge you, love the sun as I have loved,
And love the lovers, and the little birds,
That when ye bloom anew,
They never may remember I am dead,
But always think they see the self-same flowers ;
Even as the sun that ever thinks he sees
The self-same birds and lovers upon earth,
Because he is immortal, and for this
Never remembers Death."

Yesterday's flowers am I,
And I have drunk my last sweet draught of dew.
Young maidens came and sang me to my death ;
The moon looks down and sees me in my shroud,
The shroud of my last dew.

IN THE MOONLIGHT.

To-morrow
The days of gladness will be done for me;
Heavy and overcast my soul will be,
And day will seem like night for me to-morrow.

His spade he cast aside,
And told us all the story of his grief.
And thus he spake to us: "I had a daughter,
Gay silver spangles she was wont to wear.
"Father," she said,
"Which is the way that leadeth to the plain?
I love the plain, when the moon looks thereon,
And I would have the moon look, too, on me."
I followed her, one evening,
My child I followed down into the plain,
And then I saw how the moon looked on her,
While she held converse with a dead man there.
She gently stroked his head, and gave him drink,
And showed him all the loveliness of earth.
Between them stood the cross from off his grave.
I heard the dead man ask her:
"What dost thou all day along upon the earth?"
My child made answer: "I await the night."

Then he went hence, bearing his cross away,
And hence my daughter went, bearing her grief.
Then dead upon the earth I stretched my child,
That so she might be one with him, the dead,—
Yea, then I slew my child.

To-morrow
The days of gladness will be done for me,
Heavy and overcast my soul will be,
And day will seem like night for me to-morrow.

THE MURDERER.

Whoso toucheth maidens' spindles,
His heart grows light, as the first leaf unfolding
Upon a tree that groweth green.
For light a maiden's heart is, when it sees
The first leaf growing green.

He hath wandered on the roads so long already,
They are amazed, to see him not yet weary.
So long beneath the sunshine he hath wandered,
The sun doth ask: "Must thou not quench thy thirst?"
The fountain asks him: "Art thou not yet thirsty?"
The spring doth murmur: "Wilt thou drink, O man?"
So many nights he hath not slept, Night asks him:
"Can I not lull thee for a while to sleep?"
He gives them all one answer: "Let me be."
He hates them all, because they pity him.
And horror-struck he shrinks from Pity,
Since Pity horror-struck, would shrink from him,
If she but knew.
He cannot wipe the sweat from off his brow
For fear it should be blood.
No water can he drink from spring or fountain
For fear it should be blood;
And neither will he dream, for fear of blood,

Nor look upon his hands, nor pass his hand
Across his face, for the hands fear the face,
The face the hands.
He fears his very footprints,
And the colour of his shadow;
He asks his shadow: "Why dost follow me?"
He asks his threshold: "Know'st thou me?"
And he can scarcely step across his threshold,
Because the house seemeth to hate him so,
And hateful is to him.
He asks of everyone: "Didst thou, too, know him?"
They make reply: "Of what man speakest thou?"
And then he wonders, that they do not know.—
Those other eyes
Ceaselessly glare on him—that Other One
Says to him: "Now we always are together;"
And gently talks with him, as with a friend;
And leads him round about his house and saith:
"Come in into my house;"—
And shows the hearth to him and saith:
"Sit down beside my hearth;"—
And shows him, too, his couch, and saith to him:
"Lie down upon my couch;"—
Shows him the spot where once his grave will be,
And saith: "Even here,
Down here into my grave, too, thou shalt come;"—
Shows him his hands, saying: "Because thy blood
Hath made them red, I am afraid of blood."

Whoso toucheth maidens' spindles,
His heart grows light, as the first leaf unfolding
Upon a tree that groweth green.
For light a maiden's heart is, when it sees
The first leaf growing green.

THE DEAD SOLDIER.

When all the leaves have fallen,
Still on the bough some two or three remain;
And through the winter these poor leaves remember
That they must have the pain
Of falling when sweet spring is in the sky.

He slept beside the furrows, and I came
And watched his sleep.
Hard by the village they had fought,
And so they brought him dead into the village.
That battle was the first they fought, and he,
He was the first who fell.
Beneath the trees they laid him—none had time
To think of digging any grave for him;
And he was happy, thus to wait a while
Without his grave—and hear the battle's din.

And when they came upon the morrow's morn
To dig his grave,
He sorrowed, that he must go down to it
Not knowing, and all impotent to ask,
Which way the fight had gone.
Into his grave they shut him fast,

And told him naught of it;
And ever since he still doth ask himself
Which way it went—nor can he sleep in peace.

When all the leaves have fallen,
Still on the bough some two or three remain;
And through the winter these poor leaves remember
That they must know the pain
Of falling when sweet spring is in the sky.

WHERE THE SONGS DWELL.

Now tell me, where dwell all thy songs—beneath thy necklace fine?
Thy necklace, with its four brave rows, or in that heart of thine?—
I answer—Here within my heart dwell all these songs of mine.

Two brothers loved her, and for this, for this the maid is dead.
More white and clean her cottage was, her threshold narrower
Than others be. She loved the dance, she loved the strawberry red;
And yet it was her love that brought the maiden's death to her.

—They slew her with the self-same knife, and deep the four hands pressed
That blade into her heart;—the heart wept all its blood, and cried:
"Alas! her Sunday shift, her chain, the pinks upon her breast,
Her girdle, to the apron's hem, with crimson I have dyed!"

And then it asked: "Where will ye dig the grave where
she shall lie?
Beneath the hill, where sings the mill, and bright the
sunbeams smile?
Or by the road, that wanderers may see, in passing by,
Her grave, and as an alms for her, may cross themselves
the while?"

*Now tell me, where dwell all thy songs—beneath thy necklace
fine?*
*Thy necklace, with its four brave rows, or in that heart of
thine?—*
*I answer—Here dwell all the songs, within this heart of
mine.*

HE THAT BETRAYETH NOT.

I saw thy face was changed,
Yet age went not over thee.
The hazel still is green, yet the corn will be yellow soon.

I GAVE my heart to him that betrayeth not.
He said: "Come back in a hundred years again,
And thou shalt find it safe beneath my mantle still."
Yet in a hundred years we both shall be but dust;
How can I ask him then to give me back my heart?
He that betrayeth not, he lovèd me;
And happier am I than the first spring days.
But he is never happy, for he hath seen the world,
And knows that life is like a nest in the winter,
The heart of man is always cold therein.
Therefore he took my heart to keep for a hundred years,
Even in the dust.
Nor will he suffer Death to touch it, nor the earth
To quicken it.
But he will say to Death and Earth: "This is her heart,
That I in a hundred years have promised to give her back."
Then Death and Earth will wonder at him that betrayeth not.

And my heart will sleep, there in the dust of thy hand,
There, in thy hand of dust.

I saw thy face was changed,
Yet age went not over thee.
The hazel still is green, yet the corn will be yellow soon.

THE OTHER ONE.

The river, last night, swept the bridge away,
And so we must wade through the river to-day.
The maidens sing as they wade, and are gay.

A LITTLE sister the dead child had,
Since it died, little sister has grown more glad,
And saith to her mother: "Its own sweet smile
The one that is dead unto me did give;
And all the life, that it might not live,
Now lives in me." But the mother, the while,
Fell a-weeping, and bowed her head,
And remembered the child that was dead.

The river, last night, swept the bridge away,
And so we must wade through the river to-day.
The maidens sing as they wade, and are gay.

THE OUTCAST.

Go not over the little bridge,
It is too old.
The trees that have been felled lie on the earth,
And the birds that still would perch upon their boughs
Must fly very close to earth.

Why do they ask me: "Is it thou?"
Nay, nay, I know of nothing;
No one has told me aught, yet all are afraid of me,
The stones upon the road shrink from my footsteps,
But I am wearier far than if I had trodden them.
I am always left alone, and yet I hear voices always;
My sleep is never disturbed, and yet I feel
As though I had never slept.
Know ye why I am weary, so very weary,
That if the grave should say to me: "Lie down
Here in my lap and rest," I would bless the grave?
It is this—I carry one upon my shoulders,
I carry him onward ever, and feel his hands
About my throat—his breath upon my neck.
It is he that makes my step so heavy,
And drives me wild, too, with the sound of his voice,
It is he that drinks my sleep.

And when I ask him: "Whither shall I take thee,
That I may have to carry thee no more?"
He points to the horizon.
He is as heavy as a widow's heart.
I know, too, all his thoughts, and his thoughts burn me,
Because he thinks upon my sorrow.
And when we pass some hut, I say:
"Let us linger here awhile, this hut seemeth pleasant to me,"
But he answers: "Never a hut may open its doors to thee."
And when I ask him: "Friend, art thou not yet weary?"
He answers: "I? I rest in thy weariness,
Refresh myself in thy sweat."
Even on my own hearth
I can never set him down over against me,
He clings to my shoulder always—
I know not even his face.
Then I say to him: "Thou unknown one!"
And he answers me: "Thou accurst!"

Go not over the little bridge,
It is too old.
The trees that have been felled lie on the earth,
And the birds that still would perch upon their boughs
Must fly very close to earth.

BARREN.

Flow through the plains, river, flow onward afar;
My soul is broken within me, the days flee by.
When the sun in his might appeareth, the birds sing aloud,
With flowers the maidens gleefully deck their hair.
I know my cottage, because 'tis the smallest of all,
And the storks already have built them two nests thereon.

I AM she, that hath borne no children;
Yet there is no one hath cursed me, I look the same as the others.
But the nests pity me even;
The sun, the mother of stars, hath compassion upon me, and saith:
"O childless woman! what dost thou with all the days I make bright?"
Mine ear is full of the murmur of rocking cradles.
"For a single cradle," saith Nature, "I would give every one of my graves."
Joy shrinketh and turneth from me, like the setting sun from the earth.
Fruitful women draw nigh me, and tenderly clasp my hand;
But alone am I and powerless, when the anguish sweeps over me.

My threshold makes question and asks me: "Speak, oh, when will he come?"
And I have no words to answer.
I feel a horror come o'er me of all the days and the nights.
Yet beneath my heart there singeth, unceasing, a voice in me,
And I ask: "Is it his, perchance?"
But nay, for I know it is only the voice of my yearning desire.
And then I speak to the rivers: "Would ye make the plains fruitful indeed?"
I am filled with hate for the earth, that is fruitful and faileth not.
Only the graves I love, for in them naught quickens more,
Future for them there is none, even as for me.
Oh, what a flood of laughter he would bring to this threshold of mine!
And oh, how sweetly slumber beneath the sun of my smile!
Oh, and how were I blessèd, if I could but look in his eyes,
Drowning my gaze in his, and therein wholly forgetting
That other joys were on earth!
Then would the nests and the huts call me their sister, if only
His mother were I!
For I hear his voice that singeth, unceasing, beneath my heart,

For I know that he lives in me, only he cannot be born,
And I may possess of him nothing except my yearning
desire !
Mine ear is full of the murmur of rocking cradles.

Flow through the plains, river, flow onward afar.
My soul is broken within me, the days flee by.
When the sun in his might appeareth, the birds sing aloud,
With flowers the maidens gleefully deck their hair.
I know my cottage, because 'tis the smallest of all,
And the storks already have built them two nests thereon.

HE THAT TOOK NOTHING.

See how it raineth! and the corn is cut upon the plain,
And I have left my sickle, too, forgotten 'mid the grain;
Now there it lies—ah, woe is me! beneath the falling rain.

Of all the lads that joined the dance, each took some sign from me—
One took my girdle, and thou know'st full well which that may be,
The one, my sister of the cross, I fashionèd with thee.

My chain, sweet sister of the cross, another took; what needs
To tell thee which—the one that hath two strings of golden beads.

Another took my flower from me—and which one, dost thou know?
It is, my sister of the cross, the floweret that doth blow
In autumn days among the grass where thick the plum-trees grow.

But only one took naught away—and know'st thou, sister, who?
He, of whom oft I spake to thee, when I most silent grew.
He, little sister of the cross, it is I love so true.

Then quick run after him, he dwells beside the mill-pool deep,
And through his slumbers murmuring on, their watch the waters keep.
O happy water, that may sing and lull him in his sleep!

Then quickly run thou after him, my sister, do not stay
To watch the flocks upon the hill, that browse the live-long day;
Bring him a girdle and a chain, yea, and a flower—and say:

"I found them hard beside the mill, and all of them are thine."
But stay not longer, lest thou too shouldst love him, sister mine;

That we may both not have to weep together, oh beware!
My tears could not love thy tears, nor yet my care thy care;
They could not dwell within my hut, nor would be welcome there.

See how it raineth! and the corn is cut upon the plain,
And I have left my sickle, too, forgotten 'mid the grain;
Now there it lies—ah, woe is me! beneath the falling rain.

DIRGE.

ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG MAN.

How thou art sleeping, sleeping!

Thy horse, without, hath neighed;
The plains around have heard it,
And wondering stand the plains;
"Why dost thou neigh at morning
So early, gentle horse?"
The maize hath bowed its head;
The plain, its mother, felt it,
Then was the plain afraid;
"Why dost thou bend above me,
Now that no wind is blowing,
Thou maize, proud child of mine?"

Oh wander, wander—never turn about—
On through the wood, where little birds are singing,
Down to the village wander,
On through the courtyard, where the oxen lie—
Oh wander, wander, neither turn thee back,
Oh wander, wander, never turn about,
But seek the house and tread the threshold's stone,
Then pass into the chamber;

What there thou seest, tell aloud to none
Yea, do as though thou, seeing, didst not see;
For thou wilt wish thou wert the threshold-stone,
And hadst no need to look on such a sight.

How thou art sleeping now!
Heaven envied mother Earth because of thee;
Then would not Earth that Heaven should envy her,
Because Heaven gave her
The sunshine's joy,
The stars' mild light,
The blessings of the blossom-bringing rain.
So in requital, Earth gave thee to Heaven.
Then go thou up to Heaven,
Sent from the Earth;
For all the Earth hath naught so fair as thou.
Go, laden with the whole world's lamentations,
Go hence with all its tears.
Yea, I have washed thee with my tears,
And shrouded thee in sighs,
Then go, that Heaven may be content—but let it
Ask for no more, since it hath taken thee.
How thou art sleeping, sleeping!
Dark days may threaten this thy land to-morrow—
But thou hast left the road;
Thy bride be fain to veil her head[1] to-morrow—
But thou hast left the road.

[1] Note 5.

For thee, to-morrow
Is as an overthrown and empty nest.
How thou art sleeping, sleeping!
Where is thy breath?
And yet the wind still breathes!
Where is thine eyes' dear light?
And yet our eyes are open!
Now hast thou cast thy spade upon the ground,
And lain thee down to die!

Thy horse, without, hath neighed;,
The plains around have heard it,
And wondering stand the plains;
" Why dost thou neigh at morning
So early, gentle horse?"
The maize hath bowed itself;
The plain, its mother, felt it,
Then was the plain afraid;
" Why dost thou bend above me,
Now that no wind is blowing,
Thou maize, proud child of mine?

DIRGE.

ON THE DEATH OF A MAIDEN.

Down from the hill I went
On to the plain, and on the plain I saw
The budding meadows—and a tender maiden
Who fiercely strove with Death.

DEAD! she is dead!
The glory of the day is gone,
The threshold's light is quenched!
Who will go forth now in the morning early,
To wake again the old well's echoes deep,
And whose gay singing will reply at even,
Now, to the plaintive voices of the sheep?
Who will now send the sound of laughter ringing
Adown our pathways steep?

Who now will set the merry spindle dancing,
And deftly catch it, when it slips away?
The very sun shone but for her alone—
God! Thou hadst better have let die the sun!
For her the maize shook out its golden hair—
Oh! hadst Thou rather taken from the maize,
Its golden hair, my God!
The stars at night all fell from out the sky,

Only that they might reach her!
And now the earth will take and hide her from
Whenever she did pass the fresh-turned furrows,
The earth would say to her:
"Fair maid, how gladly would I make thee mine,
"To cradle thee and rock thee in my lap,
There, where all roots do quicken.
For see, I give the plain so many flowers,
Flowers that glitter in the light of day;
Now would I have this one, this only flower,
All to myself.
Her would I gently cover,
Nourish myself with her."
So the earth took her;
And clasps her now so closely in its arms.
But yet the maiden to the earth made answer:
"Good, fresh earth, take me not!
I would not thou shouldst clasp me in thine arms
Will not the quickening of the seeds suffice thee,
And the light step of lovers?
O good, fresh earth,
Let me not ever come to sleep beneath thee!
For I would veil my head, and be a wife,
A woman, strong for toil;
And I will bear thee fair and noble children
To till thy ground.
Good, fresh earth, take me not!"
But the earth took her.

And the earth holds her fast within its arms,
 And gives her back no more.
Down from the hill she went and o'er the meadows,
Wandering through deep night, and strove with Death,
Even as tangled spindles strive together.

Dead! she is dead!
The glory of the day is gone,
 The threshold's light is quenched.
Who will go forth, now, in the morning early,
To wake again the old well's echoes deep?
And whose gay singing will reply at even,
Now, to the plaintive voices of the sheep?
Who will now send the sound of laughter ringing
 Adown our pathways steep?

DIRGE.

ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

THE river went weeping, weeping!
Ah me! how it did weep!
But I would never heed it,
The weeping of the river,
Whilst thou wert at my breast.
The stars—poor stars—were weeping,
But I would not hear their weeping
Whilst yet I heard thy voice.
Unhappy men drew nigh me and told me of their woe,
They said: "We are the sorrow of all humanity."
But I had no compassion for human misery,
Whilst thou wert with me still.

Then these—the river with its weeping,
The piteous stars, the miserable men,
All prayed the earth's dark depths to take thee from me,
That so my woe might understand their woe;
And now—I weep
Yet weep I not for human misery,
Nor for the stars' complaining,
Nor for the river's wailing,
I weep for thee alone, most miserly,

Keep all my tears for thee!
Now I must rock for ever empty arms,
That grieve they have no burden any more.
Now I must sing, and know the while, no ears
Are there to hearken.
The birds will ask me: "To whom singest thou?"
The moon look down and ask: "Whom rockest thou?"
The grave will be right proud, while I am cursed,
That I did give her thee.
My womb upbraideth me, because I gave
To Death the gift that once she gave to me,
The gift that sprung from her.
Now I must see thy sleep, and never know
Whether this sleep be sweet.
Then do I ask of Earth:
"Is the sleep sweet indeed,
That in thy lap we sleep?"
But ah! thou knowest, Earth misliketh pity,
And loves to hold her peace!
Wilt thou, then, answer in her stead, and say:
"What do the birds, O mother,
Since I have gone to sleep?
And the river with its pebbles,
Since I have gone to sleep?
And thy broken heart, O mother,
Thy little heart, dear mother,
Since I have gone to sleep?
Does my father guide the oxen,

Walking beside the ploughshare,
Since I have gone to sleep?"
Oh, say all this to me!
Answer instead of Earth, that knows no pity,
And loves to hold her peace.

The river went weeping, weeping!
Ah me! how it did weep!
But I would never heed it,
The weeping of the river,
Whilst thou wert at my breast.
The stars, poor stars, were weeping,
But I would not hear their weeping,
Whilst yet I heard thy voice.

THE LUTEPLAYER'S AUTUMN SONG.

To-morrow the leaves will fall,
But I only think of the gold of the harvests to come;
So glorious the splendour will be of those harvests to come,
That we never think again of the leaves that are falling.

When she comes by
I go from hence, for then she must know that I love her;
If she cross my path, I grow dumb, and beneath my fingers
I bid the cobza to hush, till the songs all ask me:
"Why dost thou bid us keep silence?"
"Hush!" I make answer, "for now my love goeth by."
But when she abideth afar, oh then! as the summer
Doth sing of the fleeting springtide, I sing of her.
I love her step in the dance, and its stir and rustle,
For it bids her girdle dance, and the flowers in her hair.
When thou goest, O maiden, past the hut of thy Cobzar,
Let fall the flower from thy hair beside his door,

For then it will strike root before my threshold,
And be to me a memory of thy soul.
The apple-tree felt light wings among its branches,
And said: "How soft and light!"
Soft is the hay, that lies on the plain, to the footfall,
Yet thou dost not sit thee down 'mid the new-mown hay.
When thou drawest water, O maiden! thou dost not suffer
The water to keep the image it hath of thee,
And yet thou hast told my heart to keep it for ever.
As I wander on, I sing, if thou be not near me;
I know full sure, the spell that would chain thee to me,
But I do not say the words, when thou goest by me,
For I love the stir and rustle of thy dancing
When it sets thy girdle gaily dancing too.
The gentle dreams of thy sleeping hours, I love them,
As I love the whirring of thy spindle fleet.
Refresh me with cool drink from the wooden pitcher,
For the weary wanderer's thirst is dear to thee;
And whoso doth quench such thirst is beloved of Heaven,
That blesses the springs and rivers, which be not sparing
Nor from the wanderer cruelly turn away.
Beloved of Heaven, too, are the stars, that never
Withdraw themselves, nor hide their light from any,
Even from those who ne'er have looked on them.

I will pass away into Death, if thou let me die,
And never betray the place of my burial to thee;

Thou shalt ask the paths: "Which way doth lead to his
gravestone?"
And other men's graves shall answer thee aloud:
"We are not his grave."
Then among the graves thou wilt wander with airy
footfall,
For I ever loved the rustle and stir of thy dancing,
That bids thy girdle dance, and the flowers in thy hair.

To-morrow the leaves will fall,
But I only think of the gold of the harvests to come;
So glorious the splendour will be of those harvests to come,
That we never think again of the leaves that are falling.

"ACCURSED."

The heavens lower, and the ravens fly.
Are ye forerunners of the snow, dark birds?
And shall we soon have snow upon our fields?

It was not me he cursed, he cursed my house.
And when I leave the house, my soul hath rest;
But when I enter in again, the curse
Awaits me at my door.
Would I might sleep beneath the open sky!
But at the moonlight hour, One saith to me:
"Go back into thy house."
Nor can I answer: "Nay, a curse is on it."
It was not me he cursed,
He only cursed the bed whereon I sleep;
Would I might lie upon the ground to sleep!
But at the hour of sleep, One saith to me:
"Lie down upon thy bed."
It was not me he cursed, he only cursed
The food that was to nourish me,
The water that I drink.
Would I might die of hunger!
But at the hour of hunger and of thirst,
There crieth One aloud within me, saying:

" Eat then, and drink ! "
It was not me he cursed ;
He only cursed the paths I wander by ;
Would I might stay my steps !
But at the hour of sunrise cometh One
And openeth wide my door and saith : " Go hence ! "
It was not me he cursed,
Only my chain, my girdle and my spindle ;
Would I need never touch them !
But then One saith : " Take up
Thy girdle and thy spindle and thy chain."
It was not me he cursed ;
But only all I see and touch, and those
To whom I draw me near.
And I would fain see nothing more, nor touch,
Nor draw me near to any.
And to the graves I go, that I may die ;
Then from the graves One riseth and saith : " Live ! "

The heavens lower, and the ravens fly.
Are ye forerunners of the snow, dark birds?
And will there soon be snow upon our fields?

THE ORPHAN.

One scarce can see the moonlight in the gloaming,
But when night falls, it lights up all the heavens.
The rivers, they are sisters, since they flow
Down from the self-same mountain.

Go not at night-time through the village;
The dogs sleep not—thou mightest, too, meet souls.—

But yet I bade my mother's soul to wait
Beside the well for me.
Into the well I shall look down to see her,
Yet shall not dare to gaze upon her face;
But she will take a long, long look at me,
To see my face, my girdle and my shift.
And then upon my girdle there will be
Many more pearls to-morrow, on my shift
More golden spangles.
Upon the house, too, she will look, and then
Sunshine will linger round the house to-morrow.
Upon my heart, too, she will look, and then
My heart will be at rest.
And I shall ask: "How is it in the grave?"
Then shall I see her image, in the well,
With finger on its lip.

And I shall ask her: "Dost thou yearn for me?"
Then shall I see her image in the well,
Drying its eyes;
And in her girdle I shall see the flowers,
Yea, all the flowers I cast upon her grave.
And nothing will she say to me, but I shall feel her glance.
Then she will make a sign to me, that I should give her drink;
And in her name
I will bring drink to all the village huts.
And oh! how I shall grieve, because the well
Is all too deep for me to kiss her image.
I shall still seek her after she is gone,
Then shall I hear the stone that falls again
Upon her grave, as though it struck my heart.
For by the well I bade my mother's soul
To wait for me.

One scarce can see the moonlight in the gloaming,
But when night falls, it lights up all the heavens.
The rivers, they are sisters, since they flow
Down from the self-same mountain.

THE NECKLACE OF TEARS.

The Luteplayer sang before my cottage door;
I hearkened to his lay and said: "Sing on!"
But the Cobzar, he only knows one song.

THE little maid was fain to make herself
A necklace fine,
As silv'ry as the moonlight's silver glance,
Or as the river when the moonbeams shine.

And so she asked the river: "Speak, wilt thou
Give me thy waves that in the moonlight dance?"—
And then she went and asked the moon: "Wilt thou
Give me thy glance?"

"Not so," the moon replied, "because the night,
My glance doth need."—
"Not so," the river answered her, "for I
Must keep my waters for the thirsty mead."

The little maid was fain to make herself
A necklace fine;
Then said the sons of men: "Come, take our tears
To fashion this bright silver chain of thine."

Then each one gave her his most precious tears,
And glad were they
To deck the maiden's throat; and all the tears
Thus whispered low together, and did say:

"Whence art thou, sister, from what heart dost come?"
Then each one told the grief that did befall
Her parent heart, and each one thought herself
Saddest of all.

So now the maiden had her necklace bright,
More silvery than yonder river's wave,
Or glance of moonlight, yet when she put on
That necklace brave,

The tears all told her whence they came, and grew
So heavy, that beneath the burden sore,
The maiden died, and on her grave that chain
Weighs evermore.

The Luteplayer sang without my cottage door;
I hearkened to his lay and said: "Sing on!"
But the Cobzar, he knows one only song.

THE SOLDIER'S SONG.

The leaves all strove together in the forest,
Because the wind passed through;
The leaves all strove together in the forest,
And sore the forest grieved;
Yet in the forest strove the leaves together
Because the wind passed through.

ERE I go to the wars, O mother mine,
Take thou me by the hand,
And bless my weapon, and softly lay
Thy finger on my brow,
And the sign of the cross thou dost make thereon,
Watch over me shall keep
The while I sleep.
The ways shall be white that I travel by;
The maidens shall come forth
And stand at their doors and give me smiles;
And forth the sun shall come
From behind the clouds, and be all amazed
When he sees how cheerful I can be,
Cheerful as he.
For when he is dying, he hides him not;
And when my hour is nigh,

I will shine, O mother, and glow with light
Because I go forth to die.
The bird that gave me its plumes for my cap
Will be glad of it by and by,
For one of those plumes shall be reddened with blood,
Because I go forth to die.
And thy kiss, my bride, my little bride,
That close on my mouth doth lie,
It will not be loth to rest on my lips,
Because I go forth to die.
And the sign of the cross that thou mad'st o'er me,
Will be glad I go forth to die.

When I am dead, little mother mine,
Then charge the heavens, the sun, the stars,
To look yet on me in my death,
So that they surely all may know
How brave a child, O mother! thou hast borne.
And go thou by my bride's low door
What time she makes the old well shriek
In drawing water up;
Or when she calls the turtle-doves about her
In going through the wood;
Then tell her of the soldier's death,
Speaking as of some other man
Unto some other maid;
But if my sweetheart drop her spindle, saying:
"That was a hero!"

Then shalt thou speak my name to her;
For then she will forget to weep,
But will begin to bless me, rather.
And thou shalt say to our dear Earth,
That I have given my blood for her,
Therefore she, too, shall give to thee
Most bounteous harvests;
For I, I shed my blood for her!
And tell thy heart thy child is very happy,
Happy to die, even as the sunshine dieth,
In glowing, radiant light,
Thy cross upon his brow.

The leaves all strove together in the forest,
Because the wind went through;
The leaves all strove together in the forest,
And sore the forest grieved;
Yet in the forest strove the leaves together
Because the wind went through.

AT THE HOUSE.

Take whichsoever way thou wilt, for the ways are all alike;
But do thou only come—I bade my threshold wait thy coming.
From out my window one can see the graves—and on my life
The graves, too, keep a watch.

And hast thou, sister, asked the wind from whence he comes to-night,
That such strange things he tells?
Him whom I love, I never knew—yet I knew that if he came
He would bring pain to me.

A bridge across the river lies, and the river every spring
Doth bear the bridge away.

Oh sister, hark! to-night the wind from far away doth blow!
To-day he saw a house that stands with windows open wide.
And lo! the house forsaken was, and black the threshold-stone.

There stood two men and they did point their fingers at
that house,
And on his finger one had blood; the other's finger
shook.
"How many kisses?" asked the one, and then the other
asked:
"How many tears?" A maiden, too, stood there and
watched the men,
And with the spindle in her hand, she pointed at the house.

A bridge across the river lies, and the river every spring
Doth bear the bridge away.

The spindle in the maiden's hand, it shook and trembled
too. . . .
White was her shift—about her neck a crimson chain of
blood.
"That was my house," she spake—once more: "That
was my threshold-stone."
Then back she wended to her grave, and to her grave sank
down.
And still the men did stand and point their fingers at that
house.

Take whichsoever way thou wilt—the ways are all alike;

But do thou only come—I bade my threshold wait thy coming.
From out my window one can see the graves—and on my life
The graves keep watch.

THE INCANTATION.

Thou little hazel-bough,
Thou that dost grow so near the river
That it is fain to kiss thee,
Thou that wilt never see the sun,
Because thou growest all too near the river,
I plucked thee when the sun knew nought thereof,
Upon my left breast I did bear thee hither,
And 'twixt my fingers took thee.

Fall on the ashes gently—do not stir them,
For ashes love to slumber;
Hide close beneath them—and then go thy way,
Thou little hazel-bough;
Then shall the tree from which thou camest forth
Bear loveliest buds in April,
If thou wilt go, thither where I shall bid thee,
Where my belovèd dwells.

He sleeps. Now shalt thou ask him if he dream,
And bid him dream of me.
Thou shalt become the sorrow of his heart,
O little hazel-bough;

And tell him that the sorrow of his heart
Dreams but of me;
Thou shalt disturb his life with a desire.

Where is my sweetheart?—speak, when will he come?
I have charged sleep to leave him;
The water that he drinks, to bring before him
In every drop mine image;
The fragrance of his bread, to call my kiss
To his remembrance.
His couch shall murmur all my songs to him,
The whiteness of my veil encompass him
Even as the light;
My step shall sound unceasing in his ears,
And it shall seem to him
As though he saw me always coming toward him,
Yet never reach the goal.
And when his house saith: "Hither come and rest,"
Then shall he answer: "Rest dwells not in thee;"
And to the threshold's stone he thus shall speak:
"Thou dreary stone!"
And to the merry birds: "How sad ye are!"
And to the sorrowing grave: "How glad art thou!"
Nor ever shall he taste his bread's sweet savour
Without complaint, till he hath had my kiss.

This shalt thou do, thou little hazel-bough,
Thou that dost grow so near the river

That it is fain to kiss thee,
Thou that canst never see the sun
Because thou growest all too near the river.

"MY MOTHER WENT AWAY FROM ME."

(GIPSY SONG.)

My mother went away from me—so wide and vast the plain;
My fire will soon be dying out, as stars at daybreak wane.
Art thou not coming back, O love, to feed the fire again?

BESIDE my fire the wand'rer sat him down,
Since then it dieth out.
And with the wand'rer, too, my soul went hence.
Whither my soul went, now I ne'er can know,
Because he told not, whither went his steps.
The forest saw him pass, and said to me:
"I could not keep the wand'rer in my shade."
The river said: "Nor I upon my banks."

A Heiduck he was, I know, one of the race of the Heiducks,
Who are never weary of fighting, whom the sun doth love to see;
And whom the dreams of maidens do also love to see!
"What shall I bring thee back from the wars?" he asked me—
"Wilt thou the finest veil—wilt thou the slend'rest spindle?

A girdle all full of pearls, or a silver necklet heavy
To lie on thy little heart, and burden it with its weight?
A bracelet wilt thou have, that shall ring upon thine arm?
Or wilt thou have my heart, wherein thy heart hath nested?
What shall I bring?" Then I said: "I would rather have blood than all;
That will redden my girdle so white with the reddest of pearls,
That will weigh down my necklet of silver, and make my bracelet
Ring merrily on mine arm.
I will lay it, too, on the heart whereon my heart hath nested.
And shall not then both hearts grow warm thereby?" I said;
—"I would rather have blood than all!"

My mother went away from me—so wide and vast the plain;
My fire will soon be dying out, as stars at daybreak wane.
Art thou not coming back, O love, to feed the fire again?

ON THE ROAD.

Her veil is soft as a summer-cloud;
And when she passes, the flowers are sad
That they cannot follow her.

ONE can see the road from the river's edge;
Always I look along the road,
For down it something always comes
Towards me, something that doth smile,
And something that doth weep.
It is a woman, and a child.
And the weeping woman faster goes
Than doth the smiling child.
And both would give a drink to me,
But the woman doth fetch the water up,
And handeth me the pitcher full,
Quicker than doth the little child.
The pitcher's rim is broken.
Then both go hence—and I only think
Of the woman that weeps—but I forget,
Always forget, the smiling child,
Because it did not still my thirst;
And every day I go and watch
The road, to see them coming.

Her veil is soft as a summer-cloud;
And when she passes, the flowers are sad
Because they cannot follow.

CRADLE SONG.

The wind came flying through my chamber,
And when he saw me, he was joyful,
 Because I looked on thee.
Thou didst not heed the wind's rejoicing,
For thou wert hearkening to my song.

 I will sing to thee
 Of the soldier-host
That yestereven marched hence to war,
And to whom with homage we bade farewell.
The earth was proud to feel their footsteps,
The sunshine proud to be their sunshine.
Thou too shalt be a soldier, child,
So that thy land may love and bless thee.
The corn upon the fields grows fairer
 When rain hath fallen,
Yet blood the earth hath need of too;
Therefore I give thee to the earth.
Thou wilt become so brave a soldier,
That even the mountain, to behold thee,
Will one day draw her veil of mist aside.
And o'er thy lot I will not sorrow,

Nor mourn the days thou didst not live.
O Earth, I give my child to thee!

When thou shalt see thy foe lie dying,
Thy thoughts will turn toward Death, and kindly
Thou wilt look back, and tenderly, on Life,
Since Death is in thy thoughts.
Along white roadways thou shalt travel,
Whereon men thirst,
Beneath the tent lie down at even
In bitter cold.
Glorious thy lot will be—yea, even
Like to the eagle's and the sun's;
Men raise their heads when they would look at them.
Thou mayst not think of maidens' girdles,
Nor of their eyes,
And thou shalt say to them:
"I must go hence."
For thou wilt be a soldier, O my child!

The wind came flying through my chamber,
And when he saw me he was joyful,
Because I looked on thee.
Thou didst not heed the wind's rejoicing,
For thou wert hearkening to my song.

STILLBORN.

Amid the springing grain flowers, too, spring up,
Therefore they drink the dew
That the sky sends upon the springing grain.
The threshold of the cottage was all wet
Because last night such heavy dew hath fallen.

WOMAN! take up thy life once more
Where thou hast left it;
Nothing is changed for thee, thou art the same,
Thou, who didst think
That all things would be wholly changed for thee.
No dirge doth echo through thy dwelling-place;
One cannot mourn as dead
That which hath never lived.
Yet had I made for him a dirge so sweet!
Telling therein, that he was all thy hope,
And that he did not well
To go ere he had looked upon the world—
To think so ill of what he ne'er had seen.
Woman! while thou didst bear him, hast thou ever
Told him of graves? or spoken of the sorrow
Of barren wombs?

Didst thou not tell him of thy womb's rejoicing
Over his life?
And that spring sometimes comes upon this earth,
And that some souls there are, that do remember?
Nay, thou didst think on sorrow
While thou hadst joy within thee;
And sorrow frightened him.
Thou didst not tell him, that thy cottage-windows
Looked toward the plain;
That rivers love the flowers upon their banks,
And that the storks come home;
That there are birds that sing, and men as well,
And that their songs are sweet.
Nay, but thou spak'st to him of graves, and so
Their rest grew dear to him.
Now can I make no tender dirge o'er him.
I never saw him live.
Return thee to thy hearth,
And think of him before thine empty hearth;
Saying, while thou dost muse of him:
"How empty is my hearth!"
Toward thy husband stretch thou forth thy hand
With gentle smile, that he
May smile again, and think of Death no more.
For Death it was not
That passed through this thy house—but it was Life
That would not take up her abode therein.
Thou didst but ask him from afar:

"Wilt thou indeed be mine?"—
As one may ask the stars;
The stars reply: "Nay, we belong to no one."
Thou didst but say to him from far:
"I love thee!"
Even as one may say it to the sky;
The sky makes answer: "Nay, the love of men
Is nought to me!"
Go, woman, to thy daily work again—
Nothing is changed for thee.

Amid the sprouting seeds flowers, too, are growing,
And so they drink the rain
That the sky sends upon the sprouting seeds.
The threshold of thy cottage is so wet
Because last night such heavy dew hath fallen.

THE HORA.

(TO BE SUNG DURING THE DANCE.)

THE MAIDENS.

He turned his head away,
That he might not see my hut;
My apple-trees were all in bloom,
The dogs were sleeping when he passed.
He turned his head away.

THE LADS.

And do ye know which way he went,
Or the likeness that he bore?
What shape his glistening daggers were,
The fashion of his mantle's hem,
The colour of his steed?

THE COBZAR.

He was a Heiduck, yet he passed
So swiftly by, we ne'er shall know
What skill he showeth in the dance,
Or what the shape his daggers wore.
He drank from out the river clear,
And cast no glance upon the maidens.

THE MAIDENS.

Oh speak! why looked he not this way?
What was it he misliked in us?
Our girdles' hues—our merry songs?

THE COBZAR.

He loves another woman!

THE MAIDENS.

Oh speak! where is her threshold?
What flowers grow by it?

THE COBZAR.

This woman hath no threshold,
For flowers she careth not;
But yet she danceth smiling,
And to her the Heiduck goes.

THE LADS.

And was his way yet long?
His steed seemed weary.

THE COBZAR.

Soon to a cloister he will come;
And he will knock upon its door,
Asking if she be there.
Then will the cloister answer him:
"Go further."

And through the forest he will go,
But will not find her.
And even sleep will not bring back
Her image—for she danceth, smiling;
And in the dance she whirls so fast,
That none can hear her heart a-beating.

THE MAIDENS.

More slowly had we danced for him.
Speak! do his fingers love the spindle?

THE COBZAR.

They love the dagger more.
And the Heiduck knows full well
That she doth but wait for him
That she may kill him;
And that, when he shall be dead,
In her mantle she will shroud him;
That her dancing and her smiling
Will cease but to this end,
That she may kill him.
But the Heiduck's soul thereat rejoices;
He goes to her—and when he sees her,
Thus will the Heiduck speak: "Now kill me,
For I have come."

THE LADS.

Tell us no more, Cobzar;
We had loved this woman too.

THE MAIDENS.

Tell us no more, Cobzar;
Lest we should love the Heiduck.

THE LADS.

But green is yet the maize,
And of our sweat hath need.

THE MAIDENS.

And we at evening-tide
Must be upon our thresholds.

THE COBZAR.

This woman hath no threshold.
For flowers she careth not;
But yet she danceth, smiling.

THE LADS.

The flowers she treadeth down
Must surely love her dancing.

THE MAIDENS.

And he must love her dancing,
The young Heiduck, far better
Than the dancing of our spindles.

He turned his head away
That he might not see my hut;
My apple-trees were all in bloom;
The dogs were sleeping when he passed
He turned his head away.

THE MOON.

A green, green tree in my courtyard stands,
The sunshine loves it, the breezes rock it;
But when snow hath fallen, the tree forgetteth
That April once was here.

THE moon, she fears the sunshine sore,
Because the sunshine knows full well
Wherefore the moonlight is so pale.
The moon is loth that the sun should tell
Her secret; and she hides away
When the sun comes forth, that so, perchance,
The sunshine may forget.
But I am brother to the sun,
He telleth me his secrets all—
How he hath taught the birds to sing,
The ears of corn to turn to gold,
The forests to grow green.
And thus he hath betrayed to me
Wherefore the moon is pale.

The moon, she is a maiden's heart,
And love once dwelt therein,
Ah, in those days the maiden's heart
Was sunshine through and through;
But when love left the maiden's heart,
'Twas then that it grew pale.
And Heaven took it up on high,
Yet sadly still it looketh down
Upon the earth, where love did dwell,
And paler grows the while.

The moon, she fears the sunshine sore,
Because the sunshine knows full well
Wherefore the moonlight is so pale.

The rivers say, when she appears:
"O little maid's pale heart,
Come, rest in us!" and in their sleep
The birds all say to her:
"Come, go to sleep in our nests with us!"
The grave saith: "Maiden's heart,
Pale heart, make me grow paler too!"
And everything to slumber turns
That so that heart may sleep.
Yet though she see them slumb'ring all,
She slumbers not, nor nods her head,
But stands and watches Sleep.

A green, green tree in my courtyard grows,
The sunshine loves it, the breezes rock it;
But when snow hath fallen, the tree forgetteth
That April once was here.

THE TWO KNIVES.

White blossoms hath the acacia-tree,
My necklet hath blue beads.
The Cobzar's voice goes echoing through the night.

Two gleaming knives my brother had,
That, glistening, on the wall hung crossed;
And why he loved those knives so well
I could not ever think.

When down into the river cool
The sun hath sunk, the plain grows red.
And if my Love had love for me,
All my life long I'd sing thereof,
And spin him shirts so fine.

When in the chamber night is black,
I hear the knives that talk together.
One saith: "'Twas I that pierced the wife;"
The other: "I that killed the husband."
Saith one: "Such lukewarm blood had she,
Like eggs beneath the mother's wing!"
The other: "Such red blood had he,
As red as wine in glass!"

"And whosoe'er would reach that house
Must wade the river through.
The house, it knew not that we came
To kill that man and wife.
Her white veil round her head she wore,
Bracelets were on her arm,
She listened to the river's flow,
And with it her last hour flowed by.

And ever since that time, the souls
Of wife and husband hither come,
At night, to curse us both.
They say: 'Why gleam ye on the wall,
Crossed on the wall, ye knives,
What have ye done with that our blood?'—
Then we make answer to the souls:
'The river washed the blood away,
The river hurries hence.'—
'What have ye done with our blood?' they ask—
—'We dried it in the sun, and yet
The sun is shining still.'—
'What have ye done with our blood?' they ask—
—'We drank it, and we gleam!'"

White blossoms hath the acacia-tree,
My necklet hath blue beads.
The Cobzar's singing echoes through the night.

THE SPRING.

The snow has fallen, and we shall not find
The path that leads unto the huts again,
Yet we look up and see the clear blue sky,
From whence the snow has fallen.

I CHARGE thee, drink no water from that spring,
Thy soul would burn;
For in the evening late, the maiden's soul
Did drink therefrom.
Snow-white the soul is, and it thirsteth ever.
"Happy are ye," it saith unto the flowers,
"That every night drink dew!"
And to the rivers, too, it saith: "Ah me,
The plains are happy, for ye water them."
Then to the spring the soul draws nigh, lamenting
That it must pine so sore,
And saith: "I surely thought to still my thirst
There in the grave,
But Death is arid, so I have come back."

And when two lovers chance to meet that soul
The while it drinks,
They too for ever thirsting will remain,

And down into the grave, to still that thirst,
They too will go.

I charge thee, drink no water from that spring,
For in the evening late, the maiden's soul
Doth drink therefrom.

The snow has fallen, and we shall not find
The path that leads back to the huts again.
Yet we look up and see the clear blue sky,
From whence the snow has fallen.

THE SONG OF THE YOUNG MAIDEN.

A star hath fallen on the spot
Where thou art singing—
Thy bracelets' ringing
Keeps all the birds awake.

Thou that dost watch o'er children's sleep
And gently rockest them,
Thy voice is dear to sucking babes,
The aged love thy voice;
Come now and sing a song for me,
Thy voice, I love it too;
Yea, like the river's rippling sound
As through the maize it flows,
Or like the poplar's whispering
That by my threshold grows.
Sing me the song of the young, young maid,
That bids her spindle dance, and sets
Her heart a-dancing too.—

A horseman rode across the ford,
Into the water fell his sword.
What would become of the maiden's heart
Once empty of its love?

What will the swordless horseman do?
I lay and drank at the water's edge,
 The sword came swimming by me;
I thrust it into my girdle fast,
And dear is the weight of the sword to me,
 It sings me songs of battle.
 Horseman that wentest through the ford,
Wouldest thou fain get back thy sword?
 Then come and sit thee down by me,
 Beneath my threshold's poplar-tree.
There dance my heart and spindle both,
 Because the sword of the fight doth tell;
I will give it thee back, but yet I trow
 Thy thoughts are all of my spindle now!

I have sung the song of the young, young maid.

A star hath fallen on the spot
 Where thou art singing—
 Thy bracelets' ringing
Keeps all the birds awake.

THE WIDOW.

The sun is hidden far behind the willows;
The willows shivered, for they hid the sun.

If a knock sounded on my door at even,
First I should think that it was him returning,
But soon I should remember he was dead,
And know it was his dear soul home returning;
Then should I bid it enter at the door
And come close, close beside me.
And his dear soul would ask me:
"The children, and the maize-fields, and the cattle,
How fare they all?"
And I would answer his dear soul: "All well;"
That it might rest and fall asleep in peace.
Yet would I not, that his dear soul should ask me:
"How fares it with the sorrow of thy soul?"
For since unto the dead one may not lie,
I must perforce give answer: "'Tis not healed."
Then his dear soul
Never again could fall asleep in peace.
Moreover, his dear soul will surely ask
For flowers of me, and I will give it flowers,
Yet would I not, it asked me for a drink,

For one can give the dead no drink save tears,
And I would not it should perceive that these
Were tears of mine.
Then his dear soul
Were fain to see our children, and the house,
To know if all were yet unchanged, and I
Would show him house and children, for they all
Are yet unchanged.
Yet would I not, that his dear soul should ask me
To show my face—quick-sighted are the dead,
And he would see my face all drawn with sorrow.
Ah no! for when upon the door at even
His dear soul knocketh,
I must be able thus to answer him:
"All here within goes well—yea, in my heart,
And on my face;
I have forgotten thee, go hence and sleep
In peace again,"—for ne'er the dead must weep—
"All here goes well."
Then his dear soul would wend its way again
Back to the grave, nor turn to look behind;
And never more would his dear soul arise
To knock upon my door at eventide.

The sun is hidden far behind the willows;
The willows shivered, for they hid the sun.

THE FLOWER-CHILD.

(OR FOUNDLING.)

To-day is Sunday, come away and dance!
I passed the lads anon, and they were singing.
The forest said: "Oh hearken, how they sing!"

SHE will not come to-morrow,
Nor came she yesterday,
She who could end the stranger's life I lead.
Perhaps I meet her every day,
And she doth turn away her face
To hide her tears from me; for if I saw
That she was weeping, straightway I should cry:
"Lo, this is she!"
She turns away from me her face
That she my sorrow may not see,
For if she saw my sadness, then
She never could refrain from crying:
"Thou art my child!"
Perhaps she sees me standing at his side,
And dares not say: "That is thy father!"
For fear that I might hate him,
And, with him, hate her too.

Yet both I love, even as the flower its root.
I curse them not—I say to them in dreams:
"Blessed be the hour, wherein ye loved each other."
And never would I tell them of my sorrows.
And if they asked concerning them,
I would reply: "But I am happy!
And to the graves I never go;
The graves beguile me not."
This would I tell them, and my sorrow
Within my heart's depths I would hide,
As rain in hollow stones is hidden,
As one who dies, doth hide the secret
Of his last suffering and woe.
And those who see me never say:
"How full his heart is!"—rather all men think
That it is empty, empty quite, my heart.
I love the happy children of the mothers,
Because I hear them say: "My mother!"—
I listen, that I too may learn to say it,
And when I am alone, repeat it low.
But when I say it, 'tis as though I had
A different voice from them, the mothers' children,
For whom the mothers pray upon their knees,
And weave them shirts so fine, the livelong day,
And sing them off to sleep with lullabies.
O mother, whom perchance I see
In every path, and every day
Washing the hemp beside the river —

If thou wert dead, how would I love thy grave,
How gladly linger by it,
And cover it with flowers,
Not naming thee, but saying:
"I am a son of Earth, and love this grave
Because a little earth doth cover it,
And who it is sleeps here, I do not know."
Oh mother, nay! thou never canst be dead,
For surely, ere thy death, thou wouldst have called me,
And bidden me love thy grave.
Thou surely wouldst have feared
To be so cold therein
Without thy poor child's love!
Nay, but thou livest, mother;
Then come one evening, while I am asleep,
And look upon my sleep;
Then in the morning I can say: "At least
She looked upon my sleep."

To-day is Sunday, come away and dance!
I passed the lads anon, and they were singing.
The forest said: "Oh hearken, how they sing!"

THE HEIDUCK'S FLOWERS.

Look never upon me in my sleep
The while I dream,
For then thou wouldst see upon my face
The smiles of my dream, or else its tears.
The wind hath driven the clouds away.

To-day I waked early, and first of all
I saw the sun, and then the road
Where men went by, with pipe in mouth.
One was a Heiduck, and in his hand
He carried a flower—and his youth it was.
In his mouth he carried another flower—
And his song was that; and another flower
He bore in his girdle—and that was his love.
I went with my spade to dig on the plain,
From the well I drank water,
And looked at the trees;
And then in the shade of the trees I slept.
And at even I came to my house again,
I saw the moon rise as I went;
And again on the road I saw men pass by,
One was the Heiduck.

A faded flower

He bore in his hand—and that was his youth.
In his mouth he carried a faded flower—
And that was his song.
And a faded flower
He bore in his girdle—and that was his love.
I bade him not enter my dwelling-place;
He went on through the darkening night.

Look never upon me in my sleep
The while I dream,
For then thou wouldst see upon my face
The smiles of my dream, or the tears of my dream.
The wind hath driven the clouds away.

THE ROAD TO PRISON.

Onward floweth the water, onward through meadows broad;
"How happy," the meadows say, "art thou, to be rippling onward."
And my heart is beating, beating, beneath my girdle here;
"O heart," the girdle saith, "how happy art thou, that thou beatest!"

THE road that I tread, is not dusty from wanderers' footsteps,
Nor from the oxen, that go their way to the ploughing,
Nor from the passing of lovers—
Nay, but the footsteps of prisoners have left the road full of dust,
And the clang of their chains hath brought sorrow to all the trees by the way;
The clang of those chains the trees never more can forget,
Nor can they in their prison yonder, forget the trees and their sorrow.
And there in the way the prisoners met the young maiden,
And they wept when they saw her so young—
And the maiden gave drink to them all, and went hence with their blessing.

They thought of their houses, that over them wept, and of those
Who wept in the houses.
And the dust of the road, and the scorching fire of the sun,
They felt them no more, the while they thought on these things;
They strained their ear to catch the song of the birds,
The last they might hear for so long;
And they blessed the birds, because they had been the last
To sing on their way.
So wearily went they hence, as though all their life they must wander,
And already had wandered for long.
To the men they did meet they said: "And yet we are all your brothers;"
And the clang of their chains went with them.
And one on his brow yet bore the tears of his mother,
Another the kiss of his wife—and the brows were all darkened alike.
Yet each one smiled, as though he would say: "See, I smile!"
They dreaded the threshold, awaiting them there at the end;
Yet were they in haste to o'erstep it, and hide from the day
Their weariful smile and their chains.
And over the threshold, one following another, they stepped,
And the first one that crossed it, did envy the last, for that he

Had yet to o'erstep it.
Of their homes they thought, and their sins, yet they sorrowed more deeply
For their homes than for all their sins.
Their dreams were distraught with anguish, and each one, awakening,
Would say to his fellow: "I know not whereof I have dreamed—
I dreamed that so white was the road, and that prisoners' footsteps
Had left the road full of dust."

Onward floweth the water, onward through meadows broad,
"*How happy,*" *the meadows say,* "*art thou, to be rippling onward!*"
And my heart is beating, beating, beneath my girdle here;
"*O heart,*" *the girdle saith,* "*how happy art thou, that thou beatest!*"

THE SOLDIER'S WIFE.

Know'st thou what the harvest-fields are saying?
"We have loved the sunshine all too dearly;
Therefore now they mow us down, for loving
The sunshine over-much."

He slept beneath the lime-tree, and it looked upon his sleep.
Fresh from the battle he had come, and home with him he brought
The scent of blood upon his clothes; and all the flowers were sad
Because the wind loved that the best,
Better than all their scents.
Ah! soldier, thou young soldier, coming from the battle,
Thou didst not see me going by, with the rustling of ripe grass,
For thou wert lost in dreaming only of the battle,
And dearer is thy sword to thee than any glance of mine.
The eagle loves the sunshine better than his eyrie,
And dark the hut would seem to thee after the glee of fight,
The joy of breaking like a storm over the fields of dead.
And dearer is thy wound to thee, than any kiss of mine.

Now wilt thou yet require of me, that I our son should
give thee,
To join the hosts of war.
Thy courser speeds as swiftly, as clouds before the storm-
wind,
And scarcely have our women the time to reach their
threshold,
To see him flying onward, or ever he is gone.
But thou no more dost love it, the quietness of the thres-
hold;
Thou lov'st thy sword, he knows it,
And as for love of women, he biddeth thee forget it,
And saith: "Touch not their veil."

When wilt thou be returning to this thy home again?
The morning marvels not to find thee,
The evening saith: "What, not yet come?"
My hand hangs idly rocking the cradle, while I muse
Upon him in the battle;
And who will give him drink, I wonder,
And who will lull his sleep, or wailing
Will sing his dirge when he is dead.
The plain is wide, and o'er it the little birds go roaming,
So doth my heart, but thou no longer
Dost love the loving of my heart.
Thy courser speeds so swiftly,
That e'en the moon can scarcely from out the clouds come
gliding

In time to see him flying, or ever he is gone.
But thou no more dost love it, the moonlight's restfulness.
And thou upon the earth wilt slumber gladly, thinking
That it shall be thy grave;
Even as the rain, rejoicing to know that thou shalt sink
Down into earth.
My voice is dumb and silent, since thine I hear no longer;
My step is slow and heavy, since thine no more I follow;
Nor do I any longer put flowers in my girdle;
My necklet, too, now slumbers,
Because it hears no longer the beating of my heart.
Thy courser speeds so swiftly, I scarce have time to loosen
My veil to see him flying, or ever he is gone.

Know'st thou what the harvest-fields are saying?
"We have loved the sunshine all too dearly;
Therefore now they mow us down, for loving
The sunshine over-much."

MAD.

We shall not see again the foot of the willows
Until the river is low.

I NEVER bade him stay, because it was written,
In my fate it was written, that I should see him go.

And still the fire burns on, as though it could warm me.
To-morrow is Sunday, the peasant-folk will be joyful.

Then do not think, that I bade him stay beside me;
He went—but he returned, and returns every evening.—
Sit by the fire, draw closer yet, belovèd;
Thou art not as cold as I, it still can warm thee.
I am so cold, dost see, that to me it is nothing,
For I am always cold.
Ah! but how good thou wert to return, my belovèd,
To return to me—and which was the way that thou camest?
Was it there, where beside the road the mill-wheel is singing?
Or down by the path all enwreathed with the raspberry-bushes,
The boughs that have reddened my lips with their beautiful berries?

But, nay! how good thou art to return, my belovèd!
And if the dead should return, one would say to them surely:
"How good ye are to return!"—yet I love thee far better
Than all my dead over whom I lament with sore weeping.
How good thou art, that thou livest, nor lettest me weep.
And know, that the moon, too, is here, and her stars without number;
I love thee far better than them, nor do look at them ever
The while thou art with me, but lo! when thou leavest me, straightway
I look at them then, and of thee we hold converse together.
I lighted the fire, for I knew that thou wouldest be coming,
And beside it with thee I sit whispering, whispering softly.
Then my sorrow flies hence;—but I put the fire out when thou goest.
"For wherefore, indeed, should I burn without him?" saith the fire.
When thou comest again, take the path by the raspberry-bushes,
Inquire not thy way of another, nor ask or another
To give thee a drink—nay, ask of no other woman,
Keep all thy thirst for me.
The other women, they have their veils [1] and their spindles.
What song shall I choose? what song wilt thou have me sing thee?

[1] Note 6.

The river went by and bore hence the tears of the widow.
The leaves of the nut-trees will soon be sere in the forest;
And I am young and yet old, and I waken pity.
Yet why have men pity upon me—since I am so happy?
I lighted the fire, for I knew that thou wouldest be coming.

We shall not see again the foot of the willows
Until the river is low.

GIPSY SONG.

With trembling hand I touched the shift's white fold,
The beads of blue that clasped thy neck about.
Before my tent the fire burnt bright of old;
See now—the fire is out.

Beneath the hill, at witching eventide,
Thou gavest me thy fresh, sweet lips of yore;
My heart within my breast for gladness cried;
Hark now—it beats no more.

As o'er the grass, beneath the poplars there,
We gaily stepped, the high noon overhead,
Then Love was born—was born so strong and fair.
Knowest thou?—Love is dead.

Because thy soul was dark, to evil turned,
Therefore it was Love had no power to hold.
Before my tent the fire once brightly burned;
See now—the fire is cold.

THE WATER OF PRAYER.

Go not forth at the time the flowers are sleeping,
The flowers mislike that one should watch their sleep.

EVERY morning
There came a child, and set without my door
A pitcher filled, and said: "Oh! pray for her,
Oh! pray for her, the while ye drink this water."
"And is her grave already green?" I asked;
The child made answer: "Nay, it still is young."
I looked among the graves until I found
The youngest grave—and then I prayed for her,
The while I drank that water.

Go not forth at the time the flowers are sleeping,
For flowers mislike that one should watch their sleep.

NO SON.

The furrows my oxen draw are the straightest of all;
And in my belt I carry so many knives
That they girdle my waist about.
The rain doth bid the birds fly home to their nests.

I HAD a dream, that at last thou wert born to me,
Thou for whom 'tis so hard to be born to me.
That was a waking dream that I dreamed, at noon,
With eyes fixed long on the furrows all full of seed.
Some shoots already were breaking forth from the furrows,
And said: "We, we are born!"—
Then did I envy my field for its fatherhood;
It seemed to me, as though I were now the father
Of a brave, strong son, who was setting forth for the battle—
And I wept at parting, yet gloried over the fight.
And then it seemed to me that I was the father
Of a shepherd-lad, who drove his flock to the mountains;
I saw the mountain smiling upon my shepherd,
And saw that the heart of the shepherd was smiling too—
And I rejoiced.
Then it seemed to me that I was a father's father;
I saw the children greeting him on his threshold,

And the kindliness of that greeting filled my soul,
And all his house, too, overflowed with it,
And like a sun, his joy shone forth to me.
But the real sun sank down beneath the furrows,
And I seemed to myself the father of my sorrow,
And of my loneliness.
These to my hut I carried back with me,
And to my wife I spake:
"Wife, we are all alone and full of sorrow!"
Silent was she, for she knew not how to answer;
Silent were both our hearts, for they were empty.
Then of all loneliness, and pain, and sorrow
I felt myself the father—
The son of the graves I felt myself, and the husband
Of yon dumb woman, whose womb would be silent ever,
As were our hearts.
Then, that we might forget, we looked at the furrows,
All full of seed—and some shoots already were breaking
Forth from the furrows, and said: "We, we are born!"
Nor did one of us ask the other: "Whereon art thou looking?"—
We only looked at the growing seeds together.

The furrows my oxen draw are the straightest of all;
And in my belt I carry so many knives
That they girdle my waist about.
The rain doth bid the birds fly home to their nests.

AUTUMN SONG.

The birds have flown, because the mists were falling;
As night drew on, I saw them passing by.
The fire burns bright and louder howls the wind,
The wind is sad because he is so cold.

Upon my leathern belt thy hand was resting,
I felt it touch my knife.
I told thee then to let my heart sleep on;
My heart needs rest so sorely.
But yet those eyes of thine, they would not suffer
My heart to sleep in peace;
Thou saidst to me, that thou perchance might'st die—
And then I pictured how thy death would be,
And felt that at the very thought thereof
My heart grew sad—as sad as wandering birds
When mists are falling.
The burden of thee is most dear to Earth,
Therefore thou must not die.
But if thou didst, the whole wide world would wish
To die, and be a sharer in thy death.
Thy grave would draw me to it and entice me,
Beside thy gravestone I should sit me down,
Or roam around thy house,

To see thy dear soul roaming round the house.
Then to thy soul I would cry out: "Oh! stay,
Oh! stay by me," with such a strength of love,
That strong thy soul need be to break away.
But know, the soul that wanders round a house
 Is never happy.
Thou wouldst not that thy soul should be unhappy?
Then stay thou here on earth; for see, the stars
 Are all too far for thee.
And even the stars, too, must be glad to feel
They have a little sister here on earth.
Come, touch my knife, that I may be a hero,
 But never touch my heart,
For then it will not sleep, and human hearts
 Must sleep, that they may live.

The birds have flown, because the mists were falling;
As night drew on, I saw them passing by.
The fire burns bright and louder howls the wind,
The wind is sad because he is so cold.

SLEEP.

Beneath the poplars by my door
Didst sit thee down,
And on my door didst look, but never enter.
Why dost thou love the poplars' shade so much?

SLEEP said: "I know so many things;
Dreams do I know, and sighs.
More than the forest that ceaseless murmurs,
More than the river that weeps, I know,
More than the wind that sings.
And I know more than the hearts of men,
Since I can silence their hearts."
So then the forest, the wind, and the river,
And the hearts of men, all said to Sleep:
"Come, tell us what thou dost know."
Then Sleep replied: "I will tell you softly."—
And he said to them: "Rest I know.
And I know, besides, what the maiden hideth—
What the wife doth not dare to tell;
From the breath of their lips I guess it.
Death envies me, for whoso would find me,
He need not go down to the grave.
And Death speaks thus to me: 'Why dost thou let them

Awaken again?' But I let men awaken
That they may hold me more dear.
And I lay a smile on their lips, moreover,
Instead of the tears they have shed.
'Thou hast the face of my heart's belovèd,'
The maiden saith to me; and the wife:
'The voice of my husband hast thou.'
Death suffereth me to seek through the graves,
And bring forth those who long have slept
To those who sleep but an hour.
And those who sleep but an hour, they bless me
For giving back those who for long have slept.
'Thou hast the taste of the freshest water,'
The thirsting traveller saith to me.
'Thou hast the look of my home,' saith the wand'rer.
And in his shade the Past doth let me
Seek those who have suffered sore, and bring them
Up before those who made them suffer;
And those who made them suffer, tremble
At sight of those who have suffered sore.
'Lo! thou hast blood upon thy hand!'
Saith the man who hath stained his knife, to me.
'Thou hast a dagger in thy hand,'
Saith the man who hath betrayed, to me.
I am so gentle, yet so dread,
That all mankind is fain to have me,
Because they love me and yet fear.
I dwell in nests, since they are lofty;

In graves, because grass covers them.
And the hearts of men have need of me;
And I have need of their joys and sorrows
To fashion dreams of them.
And he who lies asleep is sacred.
Men say of one who sleeps: 'Heaven loves him;
For see, he sleeps.'
But he who cannot sleep, arouses
Uneasiness in all men's hearts,
They say of him, 'He cannot sleep.'"

Beneath the poplars by my door
Didst sit thee down,
And on my door didst look, yet never enter.
Why dost thou love the poplars' shade so much?

FORGOTTEN.

At the tree's foot a hay-fork hath been left,
And all day long it hears the birds a-singing.
Beside the mill grows thyme.

I AM forgotten—
And if the sun doth glance in through my window,
I am amazed that he remembers me.
The grass but grows from custom in my field,
I too from custom let my spindle dance.
The road that leadeth to my house, doth hear
The echo of no footstep. And the morning
Saith to me: "Thou art the forgotten one."
He whom I loved, he took his horse, his mantle,
And, singing, rode from hence.
At night I dream
I see him ride through river and through forest
Until he reaches a great village. There
At the third hut he stops,
And on the threshold waits for him a maiden;
The maiden speaks: "Thou from afar that comest,
Riding through streams and forests,
Hast thou no wife, far off in distant lands,
Who sorely mourns for thee?"—

He answers: "I have none." And then the maiden
Doth smile on him, and he beside her tarries.
Anon he takes his horse once more, and cometh
Unto another village, and there stops
At the third hut, wherein men laughing drink.
And the men give him drink, and ask him, saying:
"Is there not one thou dost the while remember,
In emptying this glass?"
He answers: "There is no one."
Again he mounts his horse and comes a-riding
Through a wide meadow, full of naught but stones;
At the third stone he stays,
And there beside the third stone standeth One,
Her arms outstretched toward him,
And asketh him: "Or ever thou embrace me,
Say, is there no one thou wouldst fain embrace?"
He answers: "There is no one."
For surely, the forgotten one am I—
And he I love, can ne'er remember me.
The earth remembers not the golden maize
When it is cut. The sky forgets the cloud;
The furrows, even, do forget the rain.
And if the sun doth glance in through my window,
I am amazed that he remembers me.

At the tree's foot a hay-fork hath been left,
And all day long it hears the birds a-singing.
Thyme grows beside the mill.

TO THE MAIDEN.

I weep because the wind is sighing,
But thou, thou singest in the sun.
Two little birds came past us flying—
Why I am weeping, asketh one;
The other asks why thou art singing;
One answer makes the sky: "In sooth,
For very wantonness of youth!"

Oh! do not ever from a grave pluck flowers,
The dead have naught but flowers left to-day,
The while our youth is ours.
Thy hand is toying with thy necklet gay;
And all the boughs—their little nests have they.

Oh! let no laugh the graves' deep silence break,
Silence alone is left unto the dead.
Thy belt six turns doth make [1]
About thy waist. And when didst bend thy head
To drink—"Oh, drink again!" the river said.

Tell not the graves, how fair are the spring days,
Forgetfulness is all the dead have here.
I shut thine eyes' deep gaze
Within my very soul's recesses, dear;
Thy spindle's whirring ceaseless fills mine ear.

[1] Note 7.

The threshold of thy house I love to tread,
The threshold smiles amid its flowers at me.
But do not tell the dead
That Love endureth, and may constant be.
They never would believe or list to thee.

I weep because the wind is sighing,
But thou, thou singest in the sun.

THE SONG OF THE CROSS-SISTERS.[1]

Along both of the roads there are copses of nut-trees growing;
On one they are yet green,
But on the other, their leaves have dropped already—
See, we will take the road where they yet are green.

O SISTER! speak, why didst thou not straightway tell me?
Three distaffs we emptied together, and yet, thy hand—
I saw it not tremble.
When I spoke of him
Thou didst bend thy head to drink from the wooden pitcher—
I thought thou wert parched with thirst.
O sister! was it from graves thou didst learn to keep silence,
That thou hast kept silence so?
And dost thou not think that the graves would be far, far happier
If they could only speak?
When I told thee of him
Thou didst but toy with my girdle's fluttering fringes,
And I thought thy fingers were idle.
How it is in his dwelling-house, thou hast never asked me,

[1] Note 3.

For hadst thou asked, I straightway had understood thee,
And known thou didst love him too;
Then with all my heart I had striven not to love him;
But now we love him both, we two together,
And these two loves of ours are even as the river,
That weeps because of its eternal flowing,
Yet cannot cease to flow.
Now I begin to hate thee, and thou art hateful
In all thou dost, to me;
I cannot hear my thoughts for thy spindle's whirring,
And my heart, what time it hears thee singing, deemeth
Thou singest but a dirge.
We glance at each other, whene'er he comes towards us,
To mark which hoped for him most;
And she hath smiling lips, to whom he shows favour,
But knives beneath her eyes the other beareth.
And when he goeth hence, we glance at each other,
To mark which sorrows most.

The Cross-Sister.

O sister! sister! of glass so white are thine ear-rings,
And when thou dancest, upon the face they caress thee,
Then fain would I dance by thee.
But now I am fain to see thee dead, yet am fearful
Lest thou shouldst die, for then he might weep for thee,
And then I should know, it was thee alone that he
lovèd;

And if that be so indeed, I will not know it.
The tree knows naught of the axe that shall come to
fell it,
And rejoiceth in the sun.—
If I ask of thee, why thou wearest so many a necklet,
No answer thou givest me.
But every day I seem to see thee grow fairer,
And fear that thou, indeed, art she whom he loveth,
And that it is thy heart's rejoicing makes thee
So passing fair.
The wool upon thy spindle doth seem far whiter;
And when beside the well I see thee standing,
I ask: "Why stands she there?"
Fearing, lest thou be there but to await him.
Nor am I even at rest when thou art sleeping,
Because thou surely in thy dreams must see him,
And he, perchance, in dreams doth say he loves thee,
When my image is not there to say: "Thou liest."
O sister, sister! when didst thou grieve thy mother,
Or I forget to give drink to the thirsty wand'rer,
That God now sends such punishment upon us?
Far rather would I die with no holy taper,
Or see from off my cottage wall to-morrow
The flowers wiped away,[1]
Than have a sorrow, that only grows more heavy
When it is shared with thee.
Nay! I would bless the woman who would sing me

[1] Note 2.

Dirges upon my threshold, that Death might take me
Within a month away.
And yet I will not die, for he would not sorrow;
Then should I surely know he loveth thee.

Along both of the roads there are copses of nut-trees growing;
On one they are yet green,
But on the other, their leaves have fall'n already—
See, we will take the road where they yet are green.

DIRGE OF A MOTHER OVER HER SON.

I saw a floweret on the meadow—
It grew among the new-mown hay;
The golden maize was not so fair,
Yet, seeing that flower, the little birds all wept.
Thou floweret on the meadow,
How comest thou among the new-mown hay?

Cast down thy mantle,
Down by the road-side here;
Cast down thy sickle,
There, on the other side,
And get thee home! Go home—
Stay not upon the bridge,
Stay not beside the well,
And stay not at the crossways.

So I went home.
I found the door half-open,
And the door spake: "Not from the wind that bloweth!"
I found the chamber darkened;
The chamber spake: "Not because night hath fallen!"
Then I remembered yonder little flower.
I saw thee sleep—

And understood right well
That yonder little flower was thy soul,
That sent me to thy body,
And I was not to stay upon the bridge,
 Nor stay beside the well,
 Nor loiter at the crossways.
 Yet had I known
 That yonder little flower was thy soul,
I gladly would have stayed by it awhile;
 Only thy soul was fain
 Quickly to consummate its blossoming,
 And therefore sent me hence
 That so it might not have to take its flight
 Before my very eyes.

And here am I—what willest thou of me?
 Lo, nothing any more!
What knowledge now is thine?
 A deeper one than ours.
Where art thou going, thus, without us all?
And which of us hath ere forsaken thee,
That thou shouldst so forsake us?
Hast thou not ever shared our water with us,
And wilt not now share Death?
What will the seeds be saying
Thou didst entrust to Earth,
When they come forth and find thee here no more?
Beneath thy casement, see, the maidens pass,

The river passeth too;
And on the morrow is a festival;
Hast told thy grave thereof?
Perchance, if thou hadst told it,
The grave had left thee to enjoy the Day
For that one day.
And didst thou tell thy grave thou hadst a mother?
For she, the mother of all flowers and harvests,
Had surely felt some pity.
Nay, rather hast thou told the Earth, perchance,
That we are rich in tears,
And since the Earth was dry and lacked refreshment,
She took thee hence that she might drink our tears.
Ah, but thou didst not tell her
That bitter are our tears,
Or she had feared to taste such bitterness,
And ne'er had taken thee.

See, here am I—
Yet dost thou not so much as raise thy head.
One hour already have I cried to thee,
And yet shall cry for many weary hours.
See, here am I, yea, here!
But it is naught to thee that I have come,
And stayed not on the bridge,
Nor stayed beside the well,
Nor loitered at the crossways.
See, I am here!

I saw a floweret on the meadow—
It grew among the new-mown hay;
The golden maize was not so fair,
Yet, seeing that flower, the little birds all wept.
Thou floweret on the meadow,
How camest thou among the new-mown hay?

THE SONG OF THE OLD WELL.

Thou too wilt soon go hence from me once more,
Oh thou, who camest once to me before;
My threshold will see my sorrow, and it will know
That I am weeping for that thou didst go.

I SLEEP, yet I love to be wakened, and love to see
The fresh young faces bending over me,
And the faces of them that are old, I love them too,
For those as well in the days of their youth I knew.
The song of the wind in the trees, and the voice of the bird,
I hear them not—and yet 'tis as though I heard,
For I feel that the birds are singing, there on high,
And I feel that above the strong wind bloweth by.
I sleep, yet I love to be wakened, day by day,
For I am the comforter, here beside the way;
A welcome sight to the weary wand'rer's eye,
As to the maidens, who at eve draw nigh
To sing their songs to me—and I know them well,
Yea, all their songs—and all their dreams could tell.
Whoso is tired, I love his weariness,
And I love the wand'rer's grief of heart no less,
Who comes from far. The thirst of the herds I love,
And to hear the pipe of the shepherd's flute above.

And he who fain would wake me from my sleep
Must stoop him down to me, for I am deep,
But yet, when one doth speak to me, his quest
I answer from the depths of my deep breast.
I love the moss that round my brink grows green,
Whereon the young folk come and sit, I ween,
And that the maids sometimes, with idle hand,
Stroke gently with their spindles as they stand.
In joy and sorrow, they all of them come to me,
And I welcome them all; for though asleep I be,
I love to be wakened. And something in me doth sleep—
Something I know not, 'tis my soul—so deep
That none can draw or drink it, for the Earth
It was, that gave my soul, her daughter, birth.
My soul in my depths doth sleep, and it is she
Who maketh answer, when they awaken me.

Thou too wilt soon go hence from me once more,
Oh thou, who camest once to me before;
My threshold will see my sorrow, and it will know
That I am weeping for that thou didst go.

MOTHERS' TEARS.

On the bank beside the ditch he laid his mantle,
That he might sleep the whole long night therein.
Didst thou give water to the oxen yonder?
For they were sore athirst.

I LAID me down in the grass, where it was trackless;
Then a woman came by through the grass and spake to me:
"Canst thou tell, where lies the path?"
I said to the woman: "I know not." And she replied:
"Never yet have I found a path beneath my feet,
And the villages always are far away from me;
I never can reach a threshold, and even the graves
Are always far off from me."—
Then I asked: "Did thy womb bring forth a son, or a daughter?"
And she answered: "A son it was came forth from my womb;
Since then my husband has shunned me, and I went forth,
Forth to the plains—and my child hears my voice no more;
But upon his father he smiles.
I was fain to hinder his smiling—and wept over him,
Yea, covered his face with my tears.

Since then the child is accursed, for a mother's tears
Weigh heavily on her children—the child is accursed.
And lo! the child has cursed me too, for my weeping,
So then I fled forth o'er the plain."

On the bank beside the ditch he laid his mantle,
That he might sleep the whole long night therein.
Didst thou give water to the oxen yonder?
For sore athirst were they.

THE LAST DAY.

When thou hast passed her by
And seest her no more,
I will tell thee who she is,
And thou wilt grieve to hear;
Thou wilt not turn again to look upon her.

I CAN so well remember
That, thy last day on earth.
So well do I remember,
That everyone keeps saying:
"Why dost thou think of it?"
And every day that dawneth
I see, as on that day,
The sunshine in my chamber;
And every day that dawneth
Is like that day to me.
Since then have all my days
Belonged but to the grave—
Even as of yore, to earth
Each of thy days belonged;
But that one day alone,
That thou didst live for me.
It was thy last, I knew it,

And so I took it all;
Nor would suffer thee, a moment
To look upon the courtyard,
And the apple-trees in blossom,
Or to glance toward the plain;
Nor to gaze upon the faces
That thou so soon wert leaving;
But I came and stood before thee,
And said: "To them thy life,
Thy whole life, hath belongèd,
This, thy last day, I take!"
And thou didst not weep nor sorrow,
Thou didst answer: "It is well;"
And that day, for me didst live it
With all thy heart.
This I remember ever.
I knew the grave was waiting,
But I bade it wait a while.
There was something on our threshold
That watched with fierce impatience
The setting of the sun.
And One called out upon me:
"See there, the sun is setting!"
And as the sun sank down
Thou hadst lived out for me
That, thy last day on earth;
And thy first night of death
Belongs to our first sorrow

Now to the grave, to-morrow,
And all the endless future,
For ever doth belong.
The grave said: "I have finished—
Everything have I taken,
Now therefore I may close."

When thou hast passed her by,
And seest her no more,
I will tell thee who she is,
And thou wilt grieve to hear.
Thou wilt not turn again
To look upon her.

HER PITCHER.

Now the sun takes leave of us—and after him, as he goeth,
We gaze, and see the plains that sorely mourn his departing;
It snowed this morning, yonder upon the mountains.

FRESH water my sweetheart hath in her pitcher always,
And on her shoulder beareth the little pitcher,
Tarrying on the way to give drink to all men.
And thus she speaks to each one as he drinketh:
"In the name of the dead, then, drink."
And when she sleeps in the hut, she leaves on her threshold
Her pitcher standing.
Then the widow doth go by and drink from the pitcher;
And there came at night a dead man, too, to drink;
He spake: "How sweet it is, the maiden's water."
Then the dead man lifted the pitcher upon his shoulder,
And bore it to the graves, that he might extinguish
The graves' undying thirst;
And thus the dead man spake to the others, saying:
"In the name of the living, drink."

Now the sun takes leave of us—and after him, as he goeth,
We gaze, and see the plains that sorely mourn his departing;
It snowed this morning, yonder upon the mountains.

THE HEART-STEALER.

The moon glides on above the willows gleaming,
And now the willows all night long keep dreaming
Of that, the moon's soft ray.

GIVE me thy heart, O maiden, let me hide it
Where hides my heart, the dagger close beside it
That, 'neath my girdle here, doth keep it warm.

And so thy tender, fluttering heart I'll carry
Far through the night from hence, nor ever tarry,
But o'er the plains and through the forests storm.

And as I pass them like a flash, unheeding,
All men will say: "See yon bold rider speeding,
Who bears from hence his loved one's heart afar."

Thy heart shall feel, in fight, mine thrill with gladness.
I'll show it all the world, its joy and sadness—
Yea, those that weep and those that blessèd are.

The huts, the graves, and all things, I will show them,
Thy tender, fluttering heart shall see and know them,
While thou dost tarry by thy door and say:

"Will he, who stole my heart, be soon returning?"
My steed storms on—thy envious heart is yearning
To see it all, this world so far away;

Nor will return till then—and there's no knowing
But thou wilt have, O maiden, to be going
To fetch it back again thyself some day.

Then to the forest thou wilt say: "Hast spied him,
The rider who bore hence my heart beside him?"
The forest answers: "Hence he bore it fast."—

Then to the plain thou sayest: "Hast thou spied him,
He who went hence and bore my heart beside him?"
The plain replies: "He!—he long since is past!"

Then wilt thou weep—and not thy spindle's dancing,
Thy red, red pinks, thy silver necklet glancing,
Nay, nor the maize fields, e'er could comfort thee

For this thy heart—and therefore thou art keeping
It safely locked within thy bosom sleeping,
Beneath thy girdle, nor wilt give it me;

For well thou know'st, my courser loves his speeding,
And I am one of those who flies unheeding
Along his onward course, that none can stay.

The moon glides on above the willows gleaming,
And now the willows all night long keep dreaming
Of that, the moon's soft ray.

"IT WAS NOT SLEEPING TIME."

Oh, go not forth to-night,
A star has fallen;
'Twere better thou shouldst wait until the sunrise.
The fragrance of the new-mown hay
Arises from the plain.

The child with milk-white teeth
Bore a dagger too near his heart;
And the dagger pierced its way
Deep down to the heart of the child;
The heart fell asleep in its blood.

Then forth from the heart his mother drew the dagger,
But the heart awakened not;
And she said: "Who will give me my child again, or beside him
Lay me in the grave to sleep?"
Yet the heart did never awaken.
Then down in the earth they laid him,
The little child whose heart had fallen asleep;
But as it lay in the earth, behold, it awakened,
And thus it spake: "'Twas not yet time for sleeping;
Little mother, come tell me why
I have gone to sleep or ever 'twas time for sleeping.

Had I told thee, then, I was weary,
That thus thou hast put me to sleep?
And wherefore art thou not beside me, little mother,
To sing me lullabies, since I have awakened?
I yearn for thy smile, and for flowers, little mother,
For our dwelling-house, that looketh toward the forest,
For my father, coming home with spade on his shoulder.
Little mother, oh tell me why
I have gone to sleep or ever 'twas time for sleeping!"

Oh, go not forth to-night,
A star has fallen;
'Twere better thou shouldst wait until the sunrise.
The fragrance of the new-mown hay
Arises from the plain.

FORSAKEN.

More softly the moon looks down on thee, than on others—
Would she tell thee a secret, then,
That she looks more softly down on thee, than on others?

In thy girdle wear a flower,
And make believe to all that thou art happy—
Yea, and look up at heaven, for it alone
 Can understand thy sorrow.
The birds sing songs to thee, but vain is their singing,
They cannot make thee smile,
For thou art she, whom smiles have all forsaken.
Thou dost hear his step, that goeth hence to that other—
And thou know'st his step, as it sounds on that other's
 threshold;
And the heart of the wife is full of rising tears,
 As the buds are full of sap.
But yet from thee there shall come no blossom forth,
A desert is thy heart, like a grave forsaken;
Thy heart is like a field where falls no dew,
For the dew of thy tears no more doth touch thy husband,
And his wife's white veil is fair to his eyes no more.
His eyes love that other's veil, that other's smiling;
And thou art she, whom smiles have all forsaken.

"Mother," the children ask: "why dost smile no longer?"
Then dost thou say to them: "Lo, ye are his children!"
And weepest sore, and his house with thy tears is darkened,
As the mist doth darken the plains.
Then thy husband flees from the house, because it is darkened,
And saith to that other: "Behold, my house is darkened."
And when thou seest her, then dost thou start and tremble,
As though thou didst love her, whom thou durst not hate;
For ye twain have the self-same love.
Her sin, that begets thy sorrow, thou sorely hatest,
Yet dost envy her her sin,
For heavier weighs on thee thy sinless sorrow,
Far heavier, than sin.
And thou dost grieve that thou hast no curse upon thee,
That thou canst not say: "I suffer through the curse."
And thy children thou dost not love, for they are his children,
Yet lovest them all the more, that they are his children;
Thou dost hear his step, that goeth hence to that other,
And knowest that he helps her draw the water
Up from the well, and loves the path she hath trodden,
The while he shuns the path that thou didst take.
For his wife's white veil is fair to his eyes no longer.

More softly the moon looketh down on thee than on others;
Would she tell thee a secret, then,
That she looks more softly down on thee than on others?

HE WHO REMEMBERS.

The cow has fall'n—the little cow-herd weeps.
The rain has washed the pebbles upon the way.
Black flowers have I upon my mantle white.

I SAID to him who remembers,
"What is it that thou dost see?"
He answered: "I see my heart."
Then I said to him: "Look at the mountains,
Look at the plains, and the mill
That waits to rest till the sunset,
And waits till the sunrise to waken;
Then look at the houses, their pitchers
All brimming over with water,
And everywhere mats on the ground,
And daggers upon the wall.
Or see the fountain, that boweth
And raiseth itself again,
Like the forest when wind is blowing;
The streets, where behind their waggons,
The men call aloud as they go.
Oh, do but look at it all!"
"I see only my heart," he answered,
"And it is so dark therein

That I scarce can tell what it holdeth,
But if I turn for a moment
Mine eyes away, there is Something
Moveth within, and that Something
Saith to me: Look at thy heart."

The cow has fall'n—the little cow-herd weeps.
The rain hath washed the pebbles upon the roads,
Black flowers have I upon my mantle white.

ALONE.

For when a little flower beholds
For the first time the snow, it wonders
To see it white, so white.
And the flower says: "The snow will never
Do me a hurt, will never harm me,
It is so white!"

Thou toldest me some tale, one evening,
Beside the fire,
And I looked out upon the plain.
The maize was ripe, and round about
Maize covered all the plain.
And I looked out and watched the plain,
That in thine eyes I might not look;
I broke into thy speech, to give thee
A drink, and once again, to show thee
The maize upon the plains out yonder.
When wilt thou come again, to tell me
Some tale?—I know not what thou toldest,
And yet thy voice I can remember;
I know, that now thou art gone hence,
And I were wrong to follow thee.
Thou wouldst not tarry here amongst us;
But if the house seemed sad,

Why didst thou never speak of it?
For then I would have laughed—and straightway
Glad would the house have been.
And if to thee the threshold-stone
Seemed dreary, why didst never say so?
I would have planted flowers around it,
Till thou no more couldst see the stone.
And if thou didst not love my presence,
Why didst not tell me so? and straightway
I had gone hence into my grave,
That thou might'st tarry in the house.
Because, for feet of wayfarers
All roads are long;
Strange villages know not his heart;
The wand'rer's sadness makes not sad
A stranger's heart;
They have their hearth, their wife, their mother,
The river, too, from whence they drank
Since childhood's days;
And so they ask the wanderer:
"Why hast thou left thy mother and thy wife?"

Beside the fire thou toldest me
Some tale, and thou didst watch the fire,
That so thou might'st not see my tears.
Into the fire my tears flowed down,
Then to the tears thus spake the fire:
"And would ye quench me?"

Thou toldest me some tale—and I,
I broke into thy speech, to give thee
A drink, and then once more to show thee
The maize upon the plain.

For when a little flower beholds
For the first time the snow, it wonders
To see it white, so white;
And the flower says: "The snow will never
Do me a hurt—will never harm me,
It is so white!"

THE SONG THAT WAS ACCURSED.

I never told the wind I loved him well,
And yet I love so well
To hear him rustling sweep across the forest.
The long spring evenings will come back again,
Then will the meadow to the blossoms say:
"Here are ye, once again!"

And who can ever know, how much I weep
Here in my empty house?
No one can know, since empty is the house.
I used to sing a song, whereof my love
Said to me once: "Oh, never sing that song!
Bad fortune it will bring me."
But then my love went hence, and I, I thought
So much on him, always so much on him,
That to my lips the song came back once more.
Then there did stop one evening by my door
A wayfarer—and thus I spake to him:
"O thou, that comest from the ways afar,
And further yet along the ways shalt go,
Where is my heart's belovèd, dost thou know?"
His knife was stained with blood—and yet I felt
No fear, because I thought upon my love.

Then said the wand'rer: "Sing that song to me,
And I will tell what hath befallen him,
Yea, then I'll speak to thee of him, thy love."

So I forgot and sang—
I even forgot the promise that I swore—
The wand'rer, trembling, listened at my door;
And then I saw his face was wan and pale—
"Lo, I," he said, "am thy belovèd's soul!
Since thou hast sung this song—accursèd be!"
I said: "And I have sung it unto thee,
All for love's sake!" But still his soul went hence
For evermore—and I, I am accurst,
And now, all round about me, everything
Sings me that song he bade me never sing.

I never told the wind I loved him well,
And yet I love so well
To hear him rustling sweep across the forest.
The long spring evenings will come back again,
Then will the meadow to the blossoms say:
"Here are ye, once again!"

THE LAMENT OF THE ORPHAN.

A woman passed
Who craved a drink, and I gave her a draught of water;
She blessed my threshold, and went upon her way
Blessing the threshold.

I WILL tell it my little mother in her grave;
For as she lay a-dying, she said to me:
"What time thou hast a sorrow, come and tell me
There in my grave;
For deep in my grave I shall not ever suffer,
And thou wilt think, because I keep silence always,
That I understand;
And so with me thou wilt have shared thy sorrow,
For half of it I'll take into my grave,
Yet never cease my slumbers, the while thou weepest,
But thou wilt cease thy tears when thou seest my slumber."
I will go to my little mother in her grave,
And say to her: "Art thou sleeping, little mother?
It is only I—I that have brought my sorrow;
For thou alone must know it—to thee I trust it,
Even as we trust
The dead to Earth, that never gives them forth,

But with indifference receives them all.
Mother ! my little mother ! how well and wisely
Thou didst to die, that thou might'st not know my sorrow—
In thy grave now canst thou say: 'I am she that died
That she might not look upon her daughter's sorrow.'
My little mother, thou didst never know him !
And I am glad
He was unknown to thee, for thou wouldst have loved him
Even as I love,
Yea, wouldst have wept for him, since I am weeping.
I have never asked: 'Who is it shall be his wife ?'
I have never sought out her path, that I might meet her;
I will not say, when it comes to pass I meet her:
'Thou hast taken my share of earthly bliss from me,
Broken my bread, and drained my pitcher dry;
Thee, thee I have to thank for all my tears !'
I will not tell her this, but will go, and leave her.
Nor will I say to him, if I needs must meet him:
'Be thou accurst, that thou didst take this woman !'
Nor will I even try to turn him from her,
Since she it was, that Fate for him appointed.
I will but say to him: 'Do not look upon me,
Because I weep—
Yet not for thee I weep, but for my mother,
My little mother in her grave, I weep.'
This will I make him think, that his heart may rest,
That with all his heart he may smile upon that woman,

And that remorse through me may never creep
Into his house.
But thou, little mother, since thy heart now rests,
Let me tell all, all, here before thy grave,
That I may keep the strength to tell him never!
Ah! for it matters nothing more to thee,
My little mother, and thou dost sleep so soundly
That I may wail aloud, and thou need'st not think:
'My child it is that wails, who is forsaken
Of him she loved.'"

A woman passed
Who craved a drink, and I gave her a draught of water;
She blessed my threshold, and went upon her way
Blessing the threshold.

GIPSY-SONG.

Two blades upon my knife there be,
One love my heart hath, only one;
The heaven hath one only sun,
My heart hath twofold misery.
O dagger-blades, O sun in heaven,
Ye gleam and burn from morn till even,
And my heart's woe is killing me.

I ASKED the river: "Tell me why
Thou art so sad?" It made reply:
"I drank those tears that thou didst shed."
—"O river," once again I said,
"What did those tears then whisper thee?"
—"We drank thy glance," it answered me.
And then I asked the river's flood:
"What wouldest thou yet drink?"—"Her blood!"
I spake: "O river, flowing past,
What will her blood say?"—"Cold I grow."
I spake: "O river, flowing fast,
What wilt thou answer?"—"Better so."
I asked once more the river's flood:
"What wouldest thou yet drink?"—"Her blood!"

Two blades upon my knife there be,
One love my heart hath, only one;
The heaven hath one only sun,
My heart hath twofold misery.
O dagger-blades, O sun in heaven,
Ye gleam and burn from morn till even,
And my heart's woe is killing me.

THE STRANGER.

I passed before her house,
She stood upon her threshold, and did not see me pass,
And far and long the way stretched out before me.

A STRANGER came into my dwelling-place,
I gave my hand to him;
He sat him down beside my hearth, and leaned
His brow upon his hands;
And then he asked me: "Hast thou many oxen?"
His feet were full of dust.
I did not ask him: "From what village com'st thou?"
Beside my door he had set down his sack,
And in the sack was nothing, save a stone.

I passed before her house,
She stood upon her threshold, and did not see me pass,
And far and long the way stretched out before me.

QUESTIONS.

After the harvest, then the earth is weary,
And saith : "Till the next time of sowing, I am weary,
But when that comes, I shall grow young again."

"SISTER, my little sister in the grave,
What tidings shall I give thee of the earth?"
—"Tell me if thou hast finished 'broidering,
Sister, thy Sunday shift?"
—"Already I have worn it at the dance,
Thinking the while of thee."
—"And has the hay grown thick upon our meadow?"
—"Last week we mowed it, and it has repaid
The kindly sunshine well;
I thought of thee while we were mowing it."
—"Has mother a white pink beside our door?
That is my soul, that grows and blossoms there."
—"Truth dost thou speak, the white pink is in bloom,
And is thy soul;
When I breathe in its scent, I think of thee."
—"Sister, now tell me, dost thou feel deep longing
After a husband's kiss?"

—"Yea! Of themselves toward the little children
My arms reach forth;
And my womb chideth me, that I let tarry
Her fruitfulness so long;
She speaks: 'Give heed, for Life is hid in thee.'"
—"Sister, then hast thou me no more remembered;
Oh, give me never tidings of the earth,
They do but think upon the future there."

After the harvest, then the earth is weary,
And saith: "Till the next time of sowing, I am weary,
But when that comes, I shall grow young again."

SOLDIER'S SONG.

The long days are over, and now the long evenings
Have come, and we sit by the fireside and sing;
We sing in remembrance of them, the dead heroes,
And all round about us their souls, too, do sing.

I SLEEP 'neath the stars with my hand on my heart,
I go on my way in the glow of the sun;
I say to the stars: "And when dead ye shall see me—"
I say to the sun: "Thou shalt yet see my blood;"
For the stars love to look on my slumbers so peaceful,
And the sun loves to see, when I valiantly fight.
My weapon is light as the leaf to the tree is—
As the first of white blooms on the apple-tree's bough;
And I would die young, in the apple-tree's shadow,
That so its white blossoms might rain upon me.
But if I should die in the maize, all wind-withered,
Yet still would the maize rustle on in the wind;
And if I should die by the old well, down yonder,
They still would draw water there, just as of yore.
But there on thy breast, where thy tears, O belovèd!
Would rain down upon me—there must I not die;
For I am of those who would journey hence gladly,
In the glow of the sun, with a smile on their face.

No woman there'll be to wail dirges above me,
But only one man, that shall dig me my grave.
How fair and how soft the moon shines on this evening!
Perhaps, my heart's love, it has looked upon thee,
And stands all amazed at the sight of thy beauty,
And is gentle to all amid whom thou dost dwell.
But swift as a swallow the wind flieth over,
Perhaps he has lifted thy veil even now,
And loves all the world, since so fair it doth flutter.
The grave of the hero is dear to the wand'rer,
As dear as though o'er it thy footfall had passed;
For it gladdens the graves when thou passest across them;
And the wanderer loveth the grave of the hero;
And the hero is glad in his grave, when the wand'rer
Makes the sign of the cross o'er the place of his rest.

The remembrance of men goeth forth with the hero,
And beareth him company unto his death;
And his dying is sacred and blest, as the cradle
Where lieth a child;
Yea, the banner above him is pure as the wrappings
That cover the child,
And the kiss that Death gives him is sweet as the kisses
Of mother to child.
In all men's remembrance his slumber is hallowed,
And blest by the songs that they sing on their hearth;
Men say in the spring, when the blossoms are opening:
"He sees them no more."

They say to his mother: "We greet thee, O mother!
For thou art his mother."
They say to his wife: "Be thou blessèd, O woman!
For thou art his wife."
They say to his children: "His children are ye."
Then, like pilgrims, these go to his grave, and they thank him
For being their son and their husband, their father;
And he doth rejoice, for he feels them beside him,
Yea, there by his grave.
The stars love to look on his slumbers so peaceful;
The sun loves to see, when he valiantly fights.—

The long days are over, and now the long evenings
Have come, and we sit by the fireside and sing;
We sing in remembrance of them, the dead heroes,
And all round about us their souls, too, do sing.

ASHES.

The rain says to the earth: "I grieve for the weeping heavens."
And the earth makes answer back: "What care I for all thy grieving,
Since fruitful thou makest me?"
There passed before my window
Someone, and with his finger
That Someone touched it, passing.

"SISTER, my little sister, I fell asleep by the fire,
And my heart was burnt the while, was burnt while I was sleeping;
When I awoke again, nought was there left but ashes,
And warm were the ashes still.
Then there came in our mother and said: 'I am very weary,'
And I spake: 'Wilt thou have some ashes? I have nought else to give.'
My father came home and said: 'The hail my corn hath smitten,
And heavy of heart am I.'

I spake: 'Wilt thou have some ashes?'
My sister came nigh and said: 'My belovèd loves another,
And a wound in my heart have I.'
I spake: 'Wilt thou have some ashes?'
Then my heart's beloved came in,
And he said: 'Thou wilt not give me
Thy love, and my soul is fearful.'
I spake: 'Wilt thou have some ashes?'
Then death came in and said: 'I love thy youth, and would take it
As a gift to the earth below.'
And to him, too, I made answer: 'Wilt thou not have some ashes?'"

The rain says to the earth: "I grieve for the weeping heavens."
And the earth makes answer back: "What care I for all thy grieving,
Since fruitful thou makest me?"
There passed before my window
Someone, and with his finger
That Someone touched it, passing.

THE COBZAR'S LAST SONG.

THE merry Spring, he is my brother,
And when he comes this way
Each year again, he always asks me:
"Art thou not yet grown grey?"
But I, I keep my youth for ever,
Even as the Spring his May.

To ride and hunt the whole world over
I want no flying steed,
For I have seen it all, each village,
And every flowery mead;
Men's hearts and their desires, though never
They showed them me, indeed!

No cloud I need be, through the heavens
From end to end to fly—
For just as though it were my dwelling,
I know the broad blue sky;
And thus I say to all the people:
"My house is there on high."

And once, indeed, a little maiden
Would give her heart to me,
Her tender heart, but I made answer:
"Thus do I counsel thee,
O maiden, keep it for some other,
Mine it may never be!"

As onward through the whispering forest
Upon my way I sped:
"Whence didst thou get, I prithee tell me,
Thy songs?" the forest said.
"From each one of thy leaves," I answered,
"Thy green leaves over head."

Upon the luteplayer's grave red flowers
In freshest bloom shall keep,
The sun will love to look upon them,
And even be fain to creep
Down to the grave where lies the Cobzar,
To see him in his sleep.

There with his songs the Cobzar lieth,
Nor feeleth lonely so;
And Earth will thank him for his singing
Who did her beauty know,
And sang of it—her springs and winters,
Her joys, her hopes, her woe.

Then will the luteplayer awaken
With joyful heart and young,
Because his songs, amid the living,
Are still on every tongue;
And tales of his, by children's cradles,
To lull the babes are sung.

"Where is my lute?" he will be asking,
When he awakes once more;
"My mantle, that was wont to cover
My heart so well before?
Where is my heart, indeed, that treasured
So many songs of yore?"

And when the grave to him remembrance
Of that his death doth bring,
Then will he smile, as dead he lieth,
O'er that and everything;
And turn him with a smile to slumber
Again, remembering.

As for his songs—a dewy blossom
Shall spring from every one,
The dew men drink for hearts' refreshing;
His grave beneath the sun
Will be so green, that all the weary
Shall sit them down thereon.

And all shall take him for their brother,
Who wept with them and smiled;
And Mother Earth shall claim him, saying:
"Behold, this was my child."
The luteplayer's grave, the sun doth love it;
And shines thereon so mild.

The merry Spring, he is my brother,
And when he comes this way
Each year again, he always asks me:
"Art thou not yet grown grey?"
But I, I keep my youth for ever,
Even as the Spring his May.

SPINNING SONGS.

SPINNING SONGS.

I.

WHAT didst thou, mother, when thou wert a maiden?—

I was young.—

Didst thou, like me, hark to the moon's soft footfalls
Across the sky?
Or didst thou watch the little stars' betrothal?—

Thy father cometh home, leave the door open.—

Down to the fountain didst thou go, and there,
Thy wooden pitcher filled, didst thou yet linger
Another hour with the full pitcher by thee?—

I was young.—

And did thy tears make glad thy countenance?
And did thy sleep bring gladness to the night?
And did thy dreams bring gladness to thy sleep?
And didst thou smile, even by graves, despite
Thy pity for the dead?—

Thy father cometh home, leave the door open.—

Lovedst thou strawberries and raspberries,
Because they are as red as maidens' lips?
Didst love thy girdle for its many pearls,
The river and the wood, because they lie
So close behind the village?
Didst love the beating of thy heart,
There close beneath thy bodice,
Even although 'twere not thy Sunday bodice?—

—Thy father cometh home, leave the door open.

II.

WHAT dost thou seek in the wood by night?—

I seek my youth, and I do not know
What path she took, for with footsteps light
She fled, and fast. I can see her go,
Yet never can reach her; and now again
I catch a glimpse through the forest trees
Of her white dress fluttering in the breeze;
I can hear the chink of her dancing chain,
And the ring of her laughter—and see her stay
By the brook to drink; and then I say:
"Dear Youth! let me thy distaff touch,
And from thy pitcher drink with thee;
These berries take—thou lovest such!
And on the grass come dance with me."

What dost thou seek in the wood by night?—

I seek my love—yea, him that passed
On his young brown horse, so light and fast;
Rode through the twilight, and waited not
For the moon to give him her gentle light,
And waited not for the sun to rise,
Nor even until he had forgot

My kiss, that on his lips yet lies.
The sound of his voice in the wind I heard,
And it spoke to the wind and the woodland bird,
But to me, not a single word.
I said: "Dear love, thy haste despite
Say but one word to me, and I
Whate'er thou askest will reply!"

What dost thou seek in the wood by night?

III.

WHAT hath he done, the luckless fellow,
That thou wilt speak to him no more;
Are ye not of the self-same village?

Why wilt thou, sister, not sit down by me?
And what awaitest thou, to stand so long?
Look down the way no longer,
Watch the old well no longer,
But rather hark to me, the while I sing.

What hath he done—the luckless fellow,
That thou wilt speak to him no more?
Are ye not of the self-same village?—

—Down to the river-side we went together.
He said: "Now hearken, hearken to the wind
That rustles through the leaves."
I said: "Oh see, oh see the merry sunshine
That shineth through the wavelet."

He said: "I love, I swear I love, a woman
Thou knowest not."
I said: "I love, I swear I love, a lad
Of whom thou knowest naught."

He said: "That woman ceaseless weeps for me."

And I replied: "That lad awaiteth me."
Then from the river we went hence together.
And I, I knew full well he was my lad;
And he, he surely knew I was that woman.

But yet—
Because of all that sunshine in the water,
And of the wind that rustled through the leaves,
We both were silent—we kept silence both.—

What hath he done, the luckless fellow,
That thou wilt speak to him no more,
Are ye not of the self-same village?

IV.

Lie down upon the earth,
Then thou canst hear the sound of the seeds quickening.

NEIGHBOUR, what doth thy husband when he cometh
home from work?—
—He thinks of her he loved before he knew me.
She wore about her throat a necklace of red beads,
Her teeth were white, as white as a string of mock pearls,
And he loved her.
She went away with another,
And then he took me to wife,
Because I was strong to work.

Lie down upon the earth,
Then thou canst hear the sound of the seeds quickening.

But his heart is with that other;
It went the way she went.
Then I talk to him of her, that his heart may stay with
me;
I ask what her face was like,
Although I know full well—he has told me a hundred
times;
I listen to him, and so the hours pass by.
And when I have pleased him, he says:

"Thou art like her."
But when I cross him, he says:
"Another woman art thou than she."
But I, I am strong to work, thou knowest it, neighbour.

Lie down upon the earth,
Then thou canst hear the sound of the seeds quickening.

As soon as I have a daughter, I will tell her:
"A necklace of red beads put around thy throat,
That men may love thee."
And if I have a boy, I will say to him:
"Follow the woman whose teeth are like a string of mock pearls."
For my husband always speaks of her;
I feel as though I had known her,
As though she had been an elder sister of mine,
Who was dead.
And my husband always speaks to me of her.

Lie down upon the earth,
Then thou canst hear the sound of the seeds quickening.

V.

Look on the plain, look not upon my face,
The while I speak to thee.

On winter evenings, when it snows, it snows.
My little sister asks me, wherefore now
The earth has such white hair,
Such cold, long hair, that wholly covers it?
I tell my sister: Earth has grown so old,
Puts no more flowers in her snow-white hair.
Nor may the lovers dare
To love each other any more, or speak
Of their bright youth, seeing the Earth so old.
The sun smiles down on Earth no more—he says;
"I loved thee whilst thou yet wert green, but now
What hast thou done with that thy spring?"
And Earth replies: "I gave it to the harvest,
But now the harvest's reaped,
I gave it to the maiden; now the maiden
Hath veiled her head."

Look on the plain, look not upon my face,
The while I speak to thee.

But spring will come again, and Earth remember
Her snow-white hair no more;

And to the harvest she will give her spring
Again, that it may ripen.
And she will give thee somewhat too, my sister.

Look on the plain, look not upon my face,
The while I speak to thee.

Yes, she will give thee ev'ry night new dreams,
And fragrant basil she will give thee, too,
And crystal water from the thawing rivers.

Look on the plain, look not upon my face,
The while I speak to thee.

But me—what will she give me, by the time
Her snow-white hair is gone?
Only a little place far down beneath her,
That will she give to me—just long enough
To hold my little body;
And she will give me, too, sleep for my heart,
And on my heart
Three flowers, and on ev'ry flower three tears.
One will be thine, I think, my little sister,
And one my mother's tear, and one my father's;
Only the tear of him, my heart's belovèd,
Will not be there.
And all the flowers will fade, despite those tears,
When Earth shall have her snow-white hair again.

Look on the plain, look not upon my face,
The while I speak to thee.

I.

The child was weary, it has gone to sleep.

Come down to-morrow to the river-side,
We will pluck flowers together,
The white ones thou, and I the crimson ones;
And thou shalt put the white ones in thy hair,
The crimson I will cast upon the road,
That they may wither 'neath the wand'rer's step.
—Oh, sister,
Why hast thou no compassion for the flowers?—

The child was weary, it has gone to sleep.

Into the maize-field come with me to-morrow,
There we shall see the sun, and then the moon;
The sun will be for thee, for me the moon.
And thou shalt bless the sun,
But I the moon shall curse.—
Oh, sister,
Why hast thou no compassion for the moon?—

The child was weary, it has gone to sleep.

Come to draw water from the well to-morrow,
There will we fill our pitchers ;
And thou shalt drink from one till it is empty ;
The other I will break.—
Oh, sister,
Why hast no pity for the crystal water ?—

The child was weary, it has gone to sleep.

Shalt come with me to-morrow to the fields ;—
There we shall find two lads,
One very sad, the other one right merry.
Thine is the merry one, and mine the sad.
Thou on the lips wilt kiss the merry one.
The sad one I shall slay.—
Oh, sister,
Why hast thou no compassion for his sadness ?

The child was weary, it has gone to sleep.

II.

Oh, look no more on me, I have grown old.

—And thou dost yearn for youth.
Then dost thou come and stand upon thy threshold
That thou the yearning mayst forget;
But it forgets thee not—and follows thee,
Speaking with voice as of a little child:
And lo! thou seest thyself as once thou wert,
When very young thou wert—
Three flowers in thy girdle,
Two flowers behind thine ear.—

Oh, look no more on me, I have grown old.—

Yet will I look, for I would see thy sorrow.
The plain is budding, through it flows the river;
Why dost not sit thee down beside the river,
And beg of it to bear thy pain away,
Away from thee, far out into the world,
That thou mayst hear no talk of it again?—

Oh, look no more on me, I have grown old.

Let be my pain,
For it belongeth to the house ;
What would the house do without pain, I wonder ?
It brings me Night—and every day it brings
Three flowers for my girdle,
Two flowers for mine ear.
In vain I say to it : "Why, dost not see
How old I am, and have no use for flowers ?"
Beside the window I lie down and watch
The dawning of the day.
And the day wonders at the world's fair splendour.
Time was, the day did wonder at my beauty,
When I was young.

Oh, look no more on me, I have grown old.

III.

I had two flowers. One is withered now;
The other mourneth for her sister.

WHY dost thou tremble, neighbour?—

—I saw One pass—
No wanderer it was.—

Who was it then, that thou art trembling thus?—

—It was the child, the child
That I yet bear within me,
That from my womb escaped,
To look upon the world before its birth.—

—Neighbour! Thou didst but dream it.—

I had two flowers. One is withered now;
The other mourneth for her sister.

Now will the child be sad, here in my womb,
For it has seen the earth;

And seen that I am wan with bearing it;
Yea, seen that Earth is reeking with man's sweat,
And that she covereth the dust of man.—

—All this it will forget, oh, neighbour, neighbour!
When once it sees the sun.

I had two flowers. One is withered now;
The other mourneth for her sister.

IV.

Be silent! for my sister slumbereth,
And if she be awakened, then she weeps.—

—I will not wake her, have no fear; but this,
This only, I must tell thee:
'Twas at the season of the linden's flowering,
'Twas then she died. And they did take her from me,
Leaving me naught of her, except her necklet,
The necklet from her throat,
That once was warmed all through by her warm blood.
Upon a nail I hung it, on the wall
And put a spray of basil over it.
The little necklace never moves, and yet
The beads all talk together,
Whene'er the sun peeps in and makes them glitter;
Then do they look like tears upon the wall.
And when the sun comes in, one sees full well
That withered is the spray of basil now.—

Be silent! for my sister slumbereth,
And if she be awakened, then she weeps.—

I will not wake her, but just this alone—
I must yet tell thee, that the beads all say:
"Why do they leave us hanging on the wall—
Beside this withered branch?
The whole day long do we await the sun,
And when he comes, he makes us look like tears.
The tears run down, and then the tears dry up,
But we remain for ever."
She died, and they have taken her away,
Away from me, and left me naught of her,
Except this necklet.—

Be silent! for my sister slumbereth,
And if she be awakened, then she weeps.

V.

The fire is slumb'ring,
Who will waken it?

He whom I love spake thus to me:
"Give me thy songs;"
So I have given him all my songs,
And now he sings them, that he may be strong
About his work—for in those songs I told him
That sunshine says to Earth:
"Thou shalt bear most beauteous children,
If so be thy sons are brave."

The fire is slumb'ring,
Who will waken it?

He whom I love spake thus to me:
"Tell me thy dreams;"
So then I told him all my dreams,
And he remembers them;
For in my dreams I saw
A Heiduck proud, his right hand red with blood.

And thus, I told him, sunshine speaks to Earth:
"Brave children thou wilt have,
If on their hands thy men bear stains of blood."

The fire is slumb'ring,
Who will waken it?

He whom I lo[illegible]e, spake thus to me:
"Tell me, how thou wilt sleep within the Earth?"—
So then I told, and hearing, he was glad;
For I shall sleep, down there within the Earth,
With open eyes, and on my face a smile;
And in my eyes the Earth will be,
And in my mouth.
I told him that the sunshine says to Earth:
"Brave children thou wilt have
If they but understand how they may sleep
Right well in thee."

The fire is slumb'ring,
Who will waken it?

VI.

My girdle I hung on a tree-top tall,
So the songs of the birds, it hears them all.

O MAIDEN, who gave thee those lips so red,
That smile, and those songs?—
—Lad, what is it to thee
Or why wouldst thou know who hath given them me?—
—And whither, O maiden, so fast art thou sped?
To the plum-tree groves in the valley below,
Or there, where the orchards of apple-trees grow
Overhanging the cliff?—
—Lad, what is it to thee,
Since it is not thou that shalt go with me?—

My girdle I hung on a tree-top tall,
So the songs of the birds, it hears them all.

O maiden, and what in thy heart dost thou bear?
A song, or a love?—
—Lad, what is it to thee?
If there's one that I love, sure, thou art not he.—
Where wouldst thou I died of my love, then, where?

By the river, where over me flowers shall weep?
In the hut, where the mother who lulled me to sleep,
Shall sing me my dirge?—
—Lad, what is it to me,
Since I am not going to weep over thee?—

My girdle I hung on a tree-top tall,
So the songs of the birds, it hears them all.

VII.

He turned his head, he turned his head away,
But whether he was glad, I do not know.

Why hast thou, brother, no compassion on her?
Weary she is, remorseful, and alone.—
—And didst thou go within her house, my sister?
What saw'st thou in the house?—
—I saw the little house was very poor;
No flowers in the window,
No mat upon the threshold;
Hard as the heart of the wicked was her bed,
I said: "Thou wouldst lie softer on bare earth."—

He turned his head, he turned his head away,
But whether he was glad, I do not know.

What didst thou see, my sister, in the courtyard?—
—Naught save some hay, all blackened by the rain,
And then a dried-up well,
Dry as a widow's heart.—
—What didst thou see upon her face, my sister?—
—Furrows I saw upon her face, like ruts

Upon the roads when they are full of rain;
And full of tears were these.

He turned his head, he turned his head away,
But whether he was glad, I do not know.

Hast thou no pity on her, brother, brother?—
—The carrion hath no pity on the vulture
That dies for having rent it and devoured it.

He turned his head, he turned his head away,
But whether he was glad, I do not know.

VIII.

What dost thou bear in thine apron, little heart?

Flowers I bear, and grass, and fruit from the garden.
My little mother died in the spring at even,
And I think of her, since then, in the long spring evenings,
Then do I hear no more the mill-wheel's murmur.
I put on my bravest dress
When I go to see my mother, there in the graveyard,
That so I may seem right merry to my mother.
And when I have the year's first-fruits, I fail not
To cast across my threshold two of them,
Yea, twain I give to the road, I give to the wand'rer,
That in Earth's depths my mother may not hunger.

What dost thou bear in thine apron, little heart?

The stranger came and said: "Why goest not with me?
My village stands beside a cool, green valley,
Where flights of birds come by, and even in flying
They tarry on my cottage."
Then to the stranger I spake thus: "O stranger,
Go home without me, I would tarry here;

The sun and moon are wont to see me always
Here in my little hut;
And a strange house would have no room, O stranger,
For these my sorrows and my joys; no corner
Would there be found for me to stand my distaff,
And ever would thy house be saying, stranger:
"Of joys and sorrows we've enough already,
We have no room for thine!"

What dost thou bear in thine apron, little heart?

IX.

Oh, stay beside me, for alone am I.

O MOTHER, when my hair has all grown white
I'll shroud my veil so close about my head
That none will see my hair has grown so white;
And I shall know so many, many things;
 Shall know, why thou dost weep.
And he I love, he too will then be old,
Will put his cap of fur upon his head,
That none may see how white his hair has grown;
And I can say, at last, I love him, then.
So often shall I tell him so,
That it will make him grow quite young again.
And I shall say to him: "Dost thou remember
Upon that day, beside the well, when I
 Would never smile on thee?
 That was because I loved thee."
Mother, but I would fain be growing old
That I might tell him sooner!

Oh, stay beside me, for alone am I.

And the young maidens then will beg of me
To tell them of my life—and I will tell them
About my life and all its many joys.—

The tree doth think no more, my little daughter,
About its fruit, when winter-time has come;
And thou, thou too, thy smiles wilt all forget.

O mother, O dear mother, say not so!
Because I smile with twofold joy, to think
I shall remember them when I am sad,
Too sad, to smile again.—
—My child, the birds do carol every spring,
Yet not the self-same birds.
The harvests ripen every year, but yet
Each time new seeds are sown.
Even so the heart of man sings once, once only;
Once, and once only, doth his harvest ripen.—

—O mother, O dear mother, say not so!
For when I have grown old
I'll smile upon the birds and on the harvests,
And say to them, "I too once bloomed and sang."

Oh, stay beside me, for alone am I.

X.

Tell me who she is, oh, tell me!—

—She hath no mother more, and her father's name
Is all unknown to me.
With her, the self-same moment, flowers were born—
With her the flowers will die.
Nay, nay, I love her not; yet I look at her.
She wanders through the forest, and thereat
The forest doth rejoice.—

—Tell me who she is, oh, tell me!—

—If Death should take
That which is sweetest upon earth away,
He would take her.
Strong will the children be that are born of her,
And from her breast the milk will stream in plenty,
Like rivers at the melting of the snow.—

Tell me who she is, oh, tell me!

XI.

Go draw me water from the well,
I am athirst.—

Ah! what and if the well were dry?—
—Then there is yet the river.—
—What if the river were dried up?—
—Then hath the spring still water;
But oh! a joyless heart, that hath
No other joy beside.—
—What hath befallen this thy heart?—
—They came and took its joy away,
They came by night to take its joy,
And all the way was dark.

Go draw me water from the well,
I am athirst.

And if the swallow were to die,
Yet were the lark still here;
And if the hail laid low our corn,
The hay were left us still;
But oh! a loveless life, that hath
No other love beside.—

—What hath befallen that thy love?—
—My love is dead. They murdered it
With a sure knife and sharp,
And with a hand that trembled not;
I saw its blood,
Its blood, that through my fingers flowed;
I could not stay the stream.

Go draw me water from the well,
I am athirst.

XII.

Which dost thou love to hear the best,
My spindle or my voice?—

THREE lads have died in the village there,
And one was my belovèd.
Water from out the stream he drank,
There, where a star had bathed,
And then he died; and I bewail him,
And sing my songs o'er him.
I see the star in the water still,
But he shall see it no more.

Which dost thou love to hear the best,
My spindle or my voice?

I said to the star: "For two whole nights
I would gaze on naught save thee,
If thou wouldst tell me where bides his soul.
Is it there in the flowers? in my bracelet here?
Or yon 'mid the ripe red corn?
For if I knew 'twas in a flower,
I would water it oft and tend it well,
That it might bloom for aye.

And if 'twere in my bracelet here,
I'd pillow my head upon mine arm,
That so I might have fairest dreams—
Yea, dreams all robed in white.
And if 'twere in the ripe red corn,
My sickle ne'er should mow it down,
But I would pluck it gently."

Which dost thou love to hear the best,
My spindle or my voice?

Then thus the star replied to me:
"His soul is so far away,
That though thou shouldst take the fleetest steed,
Thou couldst not reach it ever.
Stay rather, leaning by thy hut,
Perchance the little soul will come,
Come flying up to thee;
Yet never seek to hold it there,
But give it straight the fleetest steed,
That it may hasten hence once more,
That it may haste away."

Which dost thou love to hear the best,
My spindle or my voice?

XIII.

Upon my threshold thou wilt meet
An agèd man—him shalt thou bid come in.

Do not thou ask that maid again
Whither she fares—she knows it not herself,
But loveth to go wand'ring round about;
And those who pass her by disturb her not.
She wanders thus because she hath all knowledge
Of magic philtres. One she drank herself,
Not knowing that she drank it, and since then
The world is changed to her, and all the world
To her seems old—yea, thou art aged, and I;
The forest has grown old—an hundred years;
And she herself alone, she thinks, is young.
She laugheth at our age—and wandereth on
Along the ways, to find the youth who'll love her;
But never will she find him.

Before my threshold thou wilt meet
An agèd man—him shalt thou bid come in.

XIV.

Pluck no more flowers before her,
For she never gathers one.

WHITHER the streams are flowing,
O mother, dost thou know?—
—To the villages, through the forests,
And o'er the plains they wend.—
—And whither tears go streaming,
O mother, dost thou know?
Tears that are wept by women,
Tears that they wipe away
With the back of their hand, and that trembling
Upon the hand yet lie?—
—Tears flow into graves, to comfort
The dead for having died.—

Pluck no more flowers before her,
For she never gathers one.

Who was it, this evening, mother,
That thou didst let in to thee?—
—A woman it was, who sorely
Wept o'er her womb, that bears

Only dead children ever.
She weeps, that the souls of those children
Have never looked on earth,
And she prays the souls of those children
To turn them back for a moment
That she may look on them.—

Pluck no more flowers before her,
For she never gathers one.

And hath she not her cottage
Wherein she may tarry, mother?—
—Nay, she was fain to show me
Her tears—and they flowed before me;
And she said of those unknown children:
"Golden hair like the sunrise
One would have had—and that other
Cheeks as red as the sunset;
Slender, like as my distaff,
She would have grown, and beside me
Singing would she have sat.
Yet dead in my womb I bare them.
Then Nature spake thus to me, saying,
'Art thou a grave?'"

Pluck no more flowers before her,
For she never gathers one.

SPINNING-SONG.

We went across yon bridge,
But now the bridge has sunk.

Last night I saw my brother in the garden,
Hither and thither went he, and he spake:
"If I but had a mantle
To hide my belt,
And the knife, too, that in my belt is thrust,
And the knife's thoughts, that I might hide them well!
If I but had a mantle
Covering me over, even to my feet,
Along the ways I'd wander,
Beneath the acacia-trees, that are in blossom.

We went across yon bridge,
But now the bridge has sunk.

Yet I have nothing, save a shirt, and that
Was with me at my work.
The knife has fearful thoughts,—
Here in the garden I have let it lie,

Covered it with my fur-cap close and well;
But though with my brow's sweat I water it,
Dry it remains and dead;
No rain can make it, like the forest-trees,
Grow fresh and green.
And it will tell its thought,—
Unto the night will tell it!

We went across yon bridge,
But now the bridge has sunk.

And it will say: 'Why am I still so cold?
No blood would ever warm me—no, by God!
Not though I drank it, drank it!'
Why do I fill the women with affright,
Why dost thou frighten them so sorely too,
That, seeing me, they tremble?
Earth says: 'And canst thou, then, not see the sun,
That thou art all so cold,
That thou complainest, thou dost quake with cold?'"

We went across yon bridge,
But now the bridge has sunk.

AUTUMN.

A DRAMA.

TIME AND AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

AUTUMN.

The tree. My leaves have fallen, but it is not winter.
I have not yet felt any storm rush by.

The river. I will flow onward fast, to hear no more,
Yet have I been constrained to hear it all.

The wife. Come out and stand upon your thresholds, neighbours,
That from my threshold I may see you all.
Tell me, what do the nests without the birds?
My little child is lying in the grass,
His face is covered with the blades of grass.
While I did bear the child, I ever watched
The reaper work, that it might love the harvests;
And when the boy was born, the meadow said:
"This is my child. And when he is grown up
Into a fine and stalwart lad, his bride
He will choose out, forgetting all my love,
Yea, even as the brook forgets the mountain
When it flows down amid the flowery meads."

The husband. Wife, hast thou washed the dagger ev'ry morning,
At dawn, and ev'ry evening too, at nightfall?

The wife. O husband! wherefore dost thou love the knife?

The husband. Throw wood upon the fire, and I will tell thee.

The wife. Hush thee awhile, until the fire doth burn.

The fire. I rise from out the embers, like the seed
From out Earth's womb. I see the wife so pale,
So full of thought the husband. Round the chamber
I send my glance, and see the chamber empty.
Then will I sing my merry song to them:
I rise from out the embers, like the seed
Out from the womb of Earth. I quaff the sap,
Till I am drunk therewith, and so I die.

The wife. Oh tell me! wherefore dost thou love the knife?

The husband. My father loved it, for it waits for blood.
Since first it had its being, it doth wait,
And says each morning: "Will it be to-day?"
And ev'ry night: "Will it be done to-night?"
It is to drink my blood; for this I wash it.
My father spake: "The knife has yet drunk naught,
Because it thirsts to drink our blood."

The wife. I fear
That dagger, like my shadow on the ground,
Yea, like the hour of death!

The husband. What doth the child?

The wife. It sleepeth in the grass—the blades of grass
Cover its little face.

The husband. What doth the child?

The wife. It journeys on along the way of life,
Even as a cart adown the highway moves.

The husband. What doth the child?

The wife. It hath within its veins
Thy blood, and in its blood our love's sweet warmth.

The husband. Wife, wife! dost thou remember still
our love?

The wife. I had spun off three distaffs, and had filled
The pitchers full with water, and already
Had prayed for all the dead—and cast my veil
Upon the hearth, because I was alone.
When from the field thou camest home that evening,
Didst bring me on thy spade the fresh earth's fragrance.
Thy hair was damp with sweat.

The husband. And then I went;
I went away, and thou wert left alone.

The wife. I was alone, and sat and watched the ravens,
And watched the snow.

The husband. Thou wert alone.

The wife. O husband!
Why tarry on the threshold thus?

The husband. I listen.

The wife. Oh listen not by night, for then one hears
The dead men talk, who upon earth had sorrow;
They speak to us of sorrow too.

The husband. I listen.

The river. Art thou not he that went away, and now
We know thee scarce again.

The forest. Yea, thou art he
That went away—and we have all forgot thee.

The river. The winter came, and I was frozen over.

The forest. The winter came, and made me desolate.

The river. What didst thou find beside thy hearth?

The husband. The child.

The forest. What didst thou find within thy house?

The husband. The child.

The river. She felt it quick'ning in her womb, and laughed.

The forest. It leaped within her womb, and she was glad.

The river. Dost thou remember yet thy love, O man?

The husband. Home from my work I came. My spade still kept
Earth's fragrance, and my hair was damp with sweat.
My cloak I had left lying on the hearth.

Her two long tresses lay upon her shoulder;
And I did take her in my arms.

The river. And then—
Thou went'st away.

The forest. She always watched the reaper,
Because 'twas harvest-time. Why did she not
Into her own heart look, to see thee there?

The river. Still at the reaper did she look, and he
Looked back at her—and starless was the night.

The husband. The sun has sunk from heaven, and has set
The earth on fire—the earth is all a-blaze;
And I, too, burn with her. The night has sunk
From heaven, and now everywhere 'tis night,
Yea, I am plunged in night. Upon his sickle
He, too, bore Earth's rich fragrance, and his hair
Was beaded, too, with sweat.
Come, neighbour, come,
See how the sun has fallen down to Earth!

The neighbour. Why, neighbour, say, art thou not yet asleep?

The husband. Sleep I have driven from me like a thief,
And told him never to return again.

The neighbour. Sleep is man's brother!

The husband. Yet I drove him hence.

The neighbour. What wilt thou then of me?

The husband. Come hither—tell me
Who is my mother? For I have forgotten.

The neighbour. But she remembers—for she cried aloud
When thou didst strive for life.

The husband. If she remember,
Go, tell her to forget—then could I kill her
Because she gave me life—and she could never
Say, that her son had killed her.

The neighbour. But her blood
Creeps wearily already through her veins.

The husband. Speak not of blood!

The neighbour. She, too, hath banished sleep,
Even as a wife doth drive a lover hence;
And she hath said: "I am too old for thee."

The husband. She will be sorry that she doth not sleep,
When she beholdeth me.

The husband. Hast thou heard naught?

The mother. Yea, verily, I heard the old well creaking.

The husband. Hast thou heard naught?

The mother. Yea, verily, I heard
The screech-owl crying from the ash-tree there.

The husband. Naught, naught hast heard?

The mother. Yea, verily, I heard
Mine own heart's beating.

The husband. Ha! but didst not hear
My father crying from his grave? Why then
Stone-deaf thou art! therefore I too may cry.
Tell me—what will the knife that hath been washed,
The knife that yet hath drunk of nothing?

The mother. Blood!

The husband. What floweth from a piercèd bosom?

The mother. Blood!

The husband. What shall I pour upon the silken veil,
That it may nevermore turn yellow?

The mother. Blood!

The husband. A tree hath fallen in the wood, and now
The other trees all mourn for it.

The mother. My son,
Whence comest thou?

The husband. Why did I ever go?
Better had I howled curses o'er the graves!

The mother. Better hadst thou gone down into the grave!

The husband. Sleep have I driven from me like a thief.

The mother. But thou hast yet killed naught, my son
—away!

The husband. Wife, hast thou washed the dagger, art thou sure
It is washed clean?

The wife. Yea, with the river's water,
The river's very self, I washed it clean.
The river spake: "And wilt thou give it me
When it hath tasted its first draught?"

The husband. Thou shalt!

The wife. But I did tell the river: "Thou must wait
For many harvests still, before thou get it."

The husband. Oh, prate no more of harvests now!

The wife. I dreamed
That from the fields thou camest home to me,
And that thy spade still bore the scent of earth,
And that thy hair was damp with sweat.

The husband. I dreamed
That both thy tresses lay upon thy shoulder,
And that I took thee in mine arms.

The wife. What now!
Didst dream so fair a dream?

The husband. Thine, too, was fair!

The river. What doth the sunshine in the sky? It looks
Upon thy shame.

The tree. Earth whispers round my roots,
"His father's sleep is restless, since he knows."

The fire. I die, yet gladly do I die, that so
I may behold thine image never more.

The knife. For very joy I quiver, and but fear
That now his hand may tremble. If I knew
The way to kill, I'd do it all alone!

The wife. Here is the child.

The husband. Wife, dost thou love the child?

The wife. As the dead man his grave, that ne'er he leaves.

The husband. What didst thou look upon, while thou didst bear it?

The wife. I looked upon the reaper, that my child
Might love the harvests.

The husband. Kiss the dagger, wife,
As though it were the heart of thine own child.

The wife. What hath it done, that I should kiss it so?

The husband. It is about to do.

The wife. O knife, I kiss thee,
Yea, with my lips, and let this kiss of mine
Make up to thee for blood, that thou forget
To crave for it.

The husband. Let me now kiss the child,
There on his little heart. Show me the spot.

The wife. I've drawn the shirt away.

The husband. I plunge my knife

Deep down within.—Did he, too, on his spade
Bear the earth's fragrance in? And was his hair
Damp, too, with sweat?

The knife. The blood that I have drunk
Was thine own blood.

The husband. Dost thou say nothing, wife?
Dost make no lamentation? As for me,
He was no child of mine. I cannot mourn him.

The wife. I fain would lay my very entrails bare
To show thee all their anguish. I would fain
Tear from my breast this heart, all reeking hot,
To cast it in thy face. Yet I forbear,
For I must keep my heart, yea, and mine entrails,
To mourn for him.
Deep in the grass wert sleeping,
Thy face was covered with the blades of grass;
Deep in earth's bosom thou must slumber now,
Thy little face be covered by the earth;
Now it will fade, that little face of thine,
And I may never look upon it more.
Mine anguish thou wilt be, that wert my joy.
Now I must say to Earth: "Hast taken him,
Taken him from me," I, who once was wont
To say to Heaven, "Thou hast given him me."
I will not lay one flower on his grave,
That so more room be left there for my tears.
Thou art mine anguish, that wert once my joy.

The forest. Yea, he was like my tender leaves in April.

The river. I knew him—he was always merry.

The husband. River,
Now take the knife!

The river. Thine is the blood! yea, thine!
For the blood spake to me: "I come of him,
The white-haired father, and I am the blood
Of stalwart working-folk. Now they have spilt me.
Useless am I—with thee I cannot mingle,
Blood cannot turn to water. So for ever
I must flow on, red through the crystal water.
I cried to him, but yet he never heard me.
I said, 'I am thy blood,' but yet he shed me."

The husband. The sun sank down so straight upon the earth,
He set the earth on fire, and now the earth
Is all a-blaze—and I, too, burn with it.

The wife. Thou art mine anguish, that wert all my joy.

NOTES.

Note 1.

The Heiduck is the traditional hero of the Roumanian peasantry; he is the patriot who figures in all the old legends as fighting in the first rank for the freedom of his country; he is the bold, brave outlaw, ever warring against restraint, whose exploits are shrouded in fascinating mystery. A dark fate seems to pursue him, yet he is the gayest and most reckless of beings: the handsomest among men, too, the best singer, the most intrepid rider, happiest when the boundless plains or the mountain gorges lie open before him. He is indeed the most bewitching of lovers, but woe to the maiden who feels his charm too deeply, for he is of those who "love and ride away."

Note 2.

It is the custom in Roumanian villages to paint a flower on the wall of a house in which a maiden lives; but if she is known to have behaved ill, the village youths come and efface the painting from the wall.

Note 3.

The phrase "sister of the cross" has been used by the translators to denote a sort of elective relationship which is common in Roumania, and is distinguished by the untranslatable word "surata" a mere variation of "sora," a sister. It is usual there for two girls who may be no relation to each other, to choose each other out as sisters, and this choice is hallowed by a special service in church, during which their feet are chained together, to symbolize the bond that is henceforth to unite them. This is regarded as so real a one, that marriage with the brother of one's elective sister is forbidden, nor can these two "sisters" marry two brothers.

Notes.

Note 4.

This idea is a kindred one to that explained in note 2; flowers cannot prosper near the house of a fallen maiden.

Note 5.

Among the Roumanian peasants, no married woman is ever seen with her head uncovered; on the other hand, girls must always go bare-headed. Hence the expression "be fain to veil her head" means wishing to be a wife.

Note 6.

"The other women have their veils," is as much as to say "they are married;" for only married women may wear veils on their heads in Roumania.

Note 7.

"Thy belt six turns doth make about thy waist." The slenderness of a girl is measured by the number of times she can twist her long soft belt or girdle about her waist.

CHISWICK PRESS: CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND CO. TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.

A 000 156 209 9